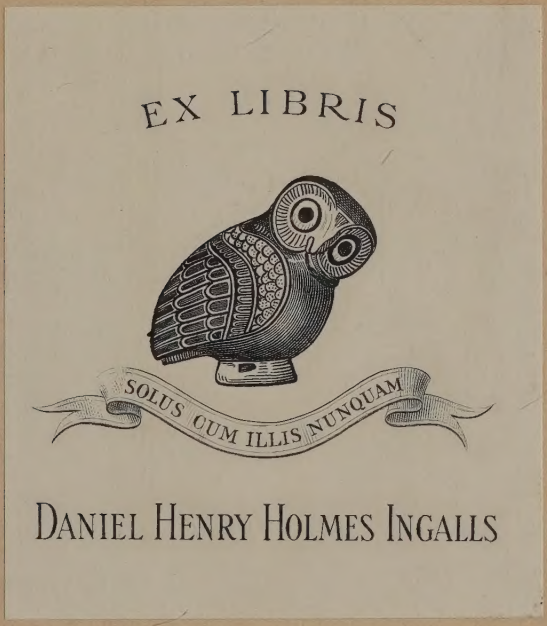
A PLAYER UNDER THREE REIGNS

SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

5/01
STRAND PRICE
$ 15.00 EA

STRAND PRICE $1
FORBES-ROBER/PLAYER UNDER T
12-99-47133-4 FILM & DRAMA
STRAND BOOK STORE



A PLAYER UNDER THREE REIGNS

THIS FOR REMEMBRANCE

BY THE
RIGHT HON. LORD COLERIDGE

Demy 8vo, cloth, 15s. net.

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD LONDON W.C.

J. F.-R. AS HAMLET.
From a drawing by the late J. Gulick.

Frontispiece.

A PLAYER UNDER THREE REIGNS · *By*

SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD
LONDON: ADELPHI TERRACE

TO

MY WIFE

AND OUR DAUGHTERS

MAXINE, JEAN, CHLOE, AND DIANA

First published . . March 1925
Second Impression . April 1925

(*All rights reserved*)

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD AND EARLY SCHOOLDAYS	11
	My Father and Mother—George MacDonald—Arthur Hughes—Professor Masson—John Philip, R.A.	
II.	HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE. LIFE IN A PRESBYTERY	22
	Monsieur Godfroi—Miss Thackeray—Cardinal Bonnechose	
III.	THE THEATRE ROYAL BACK DRAWING-ROOM	41
	Ford Madox Brown—Frederick Sandys—Alma Tadema—Rossetti—Swinburne	
IV.	ART STUDENT DAYS	53
	Samuel Butler—Christine Nilsson—Aimée Desclée—Frank Holl—Frederick Walker—E. M. Ward—Frederick Leighton	
V.	FIRST FALTERING STEPS ON THE STAGE	62
	W. G. Wills—Mrs. Rousby—Charles Reade—Miss Ellen Terry—Samuel Phelps—Arthur Cecil—George Meredith	
VI.	SOME STAGE MISHAPS, AND A RETURN TO MY FIRST LOVE	76
	Mr. and Mrs. Kendal—Bret Harte—Henry Neville—Robert Buchanan—Charles Warner—Salvini—Millais—Holman Hunt—George du Maurier—Gerald du Maurier	

CHAPTER PAGE

VII. "QUICK, THY TABLETS, MEMORY" 89

W. S. Gilbert—Frank Burnand—The Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's and Haymarket Theatres—Jean and Edouard de Reske—Miersvinski—Madame Modjeska

VIII. TOUCHING ON SOME FRIENDS 106

Justin M'Carthy—Whistler—Oscar Wilde—John Clayton—Lewis Wingfield—William Terriss—J. L. Toole—Arthur Pinero—Irving

IX. FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA 129

St. Gaudens—Edwin Booth—General Sherman—Mrs. Jefferson Davis—John Hay—Henry Adams—Henry L. Higginson—Miss Mary Anderson—England again—Edwin Abbey—Frank Millett—John Sargent—William Stead—John Hare—A Command Performance—Queen Victoria—The Empress Eugénie—Charles Frohman—Frank Lockwood—Revivals of *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII*—Gladstone—Opening of the Garrick Theatre

X. THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT 155

Bayreuth—Sir Ralph Moore—Miss Lena Ashwell—Irving and his Speeches—Mrs. Patrick Campbell—Charles Coghlan—John Davidson—Captain Robert Marshall

XI. A REVIVAL OF "HAMLET," AND A TOUR IN GERMANY AND HOLLAND 170

Grieg—Bernard Partridge—A revival of *Macbeth* in Berlin—William of Prussia—The Empress Frederick—Maeterlinck—Gabrielle Faure—Robert Tabor—Edward, Prince of Wales—The Actor-Manager—An Enforced Holiday—Sicily—Rome—Florence—Venice—Ober-Ammergau—Miss Gertrude Elliott

CHAPTER PAGE

XII. SOME ACCOUNT OF ACTORS AND DRAMATISTS IN 1874 205

Rossetti and T. W. Robertson—Two Lovers and a Strange Coincidence—Tom Taylor and Charles Reade at Loggerheads—One Ghost and Two Hamlets—Robert Browning and the Phonograph

XIII. MY PARENTS AND A THIRD VISIT TO AMERICA . . 219

Othello—*The Light that Failed*—Stage Mishaps—Madame Sarah Bernhardt—The Funeral of Henry Irving—Richard Harding Davis—Bernard Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra*—Henry James

XIV. "THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK" . . 251

Canada and its Growth—Government House—Admiral Evans—Ever-changing New York—The Morgan Library—San Francisco to New Orleans—Colorado State Prison

XV. VALE 268

The Ceremony of the Acolade—One-Night Towns—The Funeral Pyre of the Sphinx—Canadian Troops—Reasons for National Service—Sir Herbert Tree—Last Performances

INDEX 289

ILLUSTRATIONS

J. F.-R. as Hamlet. (From a drawing by the late J. Gulick) . . . . . *Frontispiece*

TO FACE PAGE

George MacDonald as Macbeth 20

A Family Group 22

Frances Forbes-Robertson, the Mother of J. F.-R., 1863 . 32

J. F.-R., Aged Ten. A Drummer in an Amateur Brass Band 32

J. F.-R. at Seventeen. (Photo by Samuel Butler.) . . 54

Samuel Phelps as Wolsey. (Painted by J. F.-R. Reproduced by kind permission of the Garrick Club.) . . . 70

The Church Scene in "Much Ado About Nothing." (Painted by J. F.-R.) 116

J. F.-R. (Painted by the late Alfred Collins.) . . . 136

"Do you see yonder Cloud?" J. F.-R. and J. H. Barnes 172

J. F.-R. as Macbeth 184

Miss Gertrude Elliott as Ophelia. (Photo by Sarony.) . 202

J. F.-R. as Othello. (Photo by L. Caswell Smith.) . 220

Miss Gertrude Elliott as Maisie in "The Light that Failed." (Photo by L. Caswell Smith.) . . . 222

Dick Heldar in "The Light that Failed." (Photo by L. Caswell Smith.) 224

J. F.-R. as Cæsar. (Photo by L. Caswell Smith.) . . 244

Chloe, Jean, Diana, and Maxine 272

A Player Under Three Reigns

CHAPTER I

MEMORIES OF CHILDHOOD AND EARLY SCHOOLDAYS

My Father and Mother—George MacDonald—Arthur Hughes—Professor Masson—John Philip, R.A.

OUR HOUSE was in the northern suburbs of London, and my garden was a big one. I say my garden, because in 1857 I was four years old, and it never occurred to me that it could possibly belong to anyone else. There was a big mulberry-tree, with purple patches on the grass beneath among the scattered lace of blue-green shadows cast by its boughs. Out into the sun, a long, long way farther from the house, there was a mound thick with bushes, and in the heart of this forest, as it seemed to me, were the graves of four birds, and a little apart the awe-inspiring tombs of two rats.

This forest was my hiding-place, my sanctuary, and when I heard my mother calling from the house, I went in the opposite direction, and came round the wood into the beaten way of the outer world, to

face her on the gravel path, quite persuaded that by this circular perambulation the sanctuary remained unknown to the eyes of mortals.

A long way beyond the forest was my kitchen garden, divided from other people's gardens by three high walls. This part of my property was shared by an enormous buck rabbit, in whose person the neighbouring cats took much interest. Some three or four would often stalk him, but their stealthy advance moved him not at all. While he took his fill of cabbage he let them surround him to within about two yards, and just as one felt " my fine fellow your hour has come," he gave a great leap into the air, and dropped with a thud at which all the cats scaled the walls in a flash. A sheep-dog who had followed my father home one day, was given a home and made much of. I, seeing in him a new friend, approached him while he was at his meal one day, but, alas, he flew at me and bit me through the lips. I carry the scars to this day, and remember the smarting sensation when salt was clapped on my mouth. I was always sorry about that dog, for it seems that my father, after the mishap, opened the front door and said to the dog " go." Slinking out with his tail between his legs he went, and never returned.

The library window opened into my garden. One or two of my toys were allowed in this room, and I was permitted to go in at the open french window ; yet I experienced a certain feeling which forced me to a lingering and hesitating step, till I heard the

deep voice from the figure at the writing-table, then only could I take heart and make a quick run for my father's chair. The colour of him was that of old ivory, clear and even; the black hair was all small curls, as was the beard, a straight full mouth, and brown searching eyes, deep set under thick brows. The skin round the eyes was a soft brown. Yes, he was good to look at, and one had faith in him. "Sudden and quick in quarrel" he was, indeed a human earthquake under provocation. He never suffered any talking or explanation in a crisis, but jumped into the matter physically. I see a big, stout drayman, who has been insolent to one of the maids and refuses to go. I see the quick rush of my father, almost knocking inquisitive me over. I hear a protesting cry from my mother, and then in the twinkling of an eye, a prostrate drayman among the flowers in the front garden! When a young man, my father wanted to go into the Army, but his headstrong mother was all for another profession, the Church. On his protesting, he was taken from Marischal College, Aberdeen, and his gown torn up. After a short term of journalism, he took the coach, then the only way to London. There in the street one day he saw a beautiful girl, found out where she lived, stormed the house in his own impetuous way, and in a few weeks carried off his bride, and that is how I came to be in my garden in the northern suburbs of London.

The first impression I have of my mother is strangely enough connected with a shock. She

stood in the open french window of my father's room, with a big bright ball in her hands, a slim and lovely figure. That ball—a new present for me, of course! I fell on the gravel path in my haste to have it. Then came a thunder-clap—nay, a vast upheaval of the whole social fabric, the ball was not for me!

A young person had arrived some ten or twelve months before, in whom I had taken a kindly but guarded interest. I had permitted her to invade my garden with the nurse, and had given her a flower or two—her very existence was on sufferance only, yet that ball was for her! Here was nothing but a cold-blooded and humiliating affront, and put upon me by my mother! The outrage! When in the long after years my eldest daughter, at the age of four, pulled at the skirts of one of a group of ladies standing round our second newly born, and said, "I have a bunny with a much nicer face than hers," I remembered that other new-comer, and understood.

My mother bore eleven children—six boys and five girls, and eight of us are living. In the earlier part of her married life she found time to continue her studies in music and painting. She succeeded so well in music, that one or two of her compositions were published; had she had the opportunities of studying art that young people have nowadays, she would have made her mark as a painter. The family soon outgrew the house, and we moved into a bigger one, a vast mansion as it seemed to me.

There were graceful pilasters in two of the rooms that came from the dismantling of Carlton House.

Another vivid sensation about that time remains in my mind caused by a grand view of soldiers. I was taken to see the Guards come home from the Crimea. My father and I stood on the top of a four-wheeler, hard by where the Guards' Monument now stands. Crowds pushed and cheered, and the cab swayed with the press of the people. As the Guards' band passed, it throbbed out "Bonnie Annie Laurie." All the men wore beards, and I was curious to know why so many of them were sitting or lying in wagons. Why did they not tramp along with the rest? The explanation was a rude shock.

Red coatees, pipe-clay, high stocks, and busbies "braved the battle and the breeze." There was a smart, stiff formality in all costumes in those days, and it was the time of hoops, which gave me a great deal of trouble, for, often being placed in a cab or carriage between my mother and one of her sisters, the hoops would bulge over me from both sides, meeting under my chin, so that the sights of the streets were in a large measure denied me. The manner of sitting employed by the ladies so that the hoops should not fly straight up into the air was this: the hand gave a swift, delicately deft hitch upward to the hoops at the back; this depressed the hoops in the front and allowed the wearer to sit, with a considerable ballooning, mainly to the right and left. An awful fashion indeed, but I gathered very comfortable in the wearing. There was com-

pensation, however, in the bonnet then worn. Oh, that bonnet! Not any headgear has matched it since for charm as a frame to the face of woman! Before the bonnet went out, I was just tall enough to set in order that bow under my mother's soft little chin. I recall yet the reaching of my hands upwards and the slight forward stoop of the lavender-scented lady as she kissed me.

Our new house had a big garden, with many fruit-trees and laburnum and lilac. A deep vale towards the end of the garden was said to have been part of an ancient British encampment. There was a coach-house and stable in the vale. We made sure the coach and horses would come some day, but they never did. Only came a fascinating, unbroken Highland pony, attempts at the breaking-in of which were peculiar. A pair of old trousers stuffed with hay and a brick or two were placed on his back, but he soon threw this strange rider, and ate the hay from the seat thereof!

A morning came when I was taken to a day school hard by, conducted by a German. At that time the Prussians had lately grabbed Schleswig-Holstein, which caused a strong feeling of indignation in England and elsewhere. Naturally enough, among the boys were a Danish faction and a Prussian one (there were many Prussians in the school). I was one of the Danish army, and we invariably beat the Prussians in the playground. My father was one of those who thought that Great Britain should support Denmark. He perceived the growing

aggressiveness of Prussia, and felt the importance of it being checked.

In the course of time I was sent to Charterhouse, then in its ancient home in the heart of the City. The school-house stood on rising ground between two large playing fields, upper and under greens, for cricket and football respectively. Many famous names were cut on the stones of the school-house. In the grounds was an old withered tree known as "hoop tree," because in the days when public schoolboys were not above trundling hoops, at the end of the season of this pastime they threw the hoops up into the branches, there to remain festooning the tree till the wind and rain brought them down. There was also kept up a very ancient encounter on under green called lemon-peel fight, which took place on Shrove Tuesday. Each boy saved his lemon, and being armed with the two halves, sallied forth to a pitched battle of equal sides. At first the lemons were very hard, but the ammunition got softer as the battle raged. For this reason I found it convenient to delay action, as did the other small boys, until the lemons became softer. It was an unwritten law that no promiscuous fisticuffs should take place. Did the boys quarrel, the fight had to be conducted with all due ceremony in "Fighting Corner."

A first day at a great public school is an ordeal for most boys. It certainly was for me. Round one gathered a crowd of bigger boys with many questions. "What is your name" for the first.

The length of mine appeared to give considerable offence. "What is your father?" was the next. I answered, "He is a writer." "What does he write for?" "He writes for a paper." My father at the time was on the staff of a weekly journal called *The Reader*, so when I was asked for what paper he wrote, my simple answer, *The Reader*, caused some amazement and indignation at the new boy's supposed facetiousness. A great hubbub ensued, "Cheeky young devil," and they began to hustle me. "Look at him, he's going to cry; now Mr. Facetious, what's the matter with you?" Then came a voice in my ear, "Say you've got a cold," and I did! I was too shy ever to thank the good-hearted fellow for saving the situation.

In chapel there is an elaborate tomb on which the carved recumbent figure of Thomas Sutton, the founder of the Charterhouse, lies in all his trappings. Even as a thoughtless, unheeding boy I remember being struck with the aspect of chapel during service, attended as it was by the very young and the very old in two defined groups, only the masters representing the prime of life in that picturesque congregation. The gentlemen pensioners in their long black and voluminous cloaks were ranged on the one side and the coming generation on the other. High up above our heads from the gallery round the organ came the treble voices of the choir of the gown boys singing lustily. The old fellows were dubbed by the boys "old cods," why "cods" I could never discover.

It has to be confessed that I was not a success at school, being always nearer the bottom of the form than the top, much to the chagrin of my father, who had dreams of a scholarship and Oxford for me, never, alas, to be realized.

In my early life my father and mother had very dear friends in George MacDonald and his brilliant and witty wife, and the numerous children of both families saw much of each other. Many children's parties were given, and a child with us all was the lovable George MacDonald, who entered into our games with a naïve enthusiasm, to the joy of us youngsters. I remember well that Arthur Hughes, the painter, in the same spirit often helped to entertain at these children's gatherings. MacDonald was a saintly character and literally worshipped by his friends. He brought with him sunlight and hope wherever he went, and was untiring in his good works. No adverse circumstances seemed to touch him one jot, and of those he must have had a full share, for he brought up a large family solely on his pen, and with such love and care that all took on something of his beautiful disposition. His eldest son, Greville, became a famous throat specialist, and his second, Robert, an architect of considerable attainment.

Another family of whom we saw much was that of Professor David Masson, then living in London, the author of *The Life of Milton*, *De Quincey*, and many other works, some time in the English chair at Edinburgh University, and incidentally my god-

father. His gifted and beautiful daughters made their own mark in life, and his son, Orme, is now a distinguished professor in Melbourne University. As far back as the sixties David Masson held firmly in favour of the women's franchise. He was a friend of Mazzini and most of the men who fought for the freedom of Italy.

One of my father's most intimate friends (they had been boys together in Aberdeen) was John Philip, R.A., called by his many admirers Philip of Spain. On his return from a visit to Madrid, he was naturally carried away by the art of that master of the brush, Velazquez, and decided he would henceforth follow in his steps as best he could. I remember him well, a grave, dignified man, imposing in appearance, looking indeed as if he had stepped out of one of his hero's canvases, with his pointed grey beard, and always wearing, as did George Frederick Watts, a black velvet skull cap. Modest and retiring in disposition, he could, however, flare up when disturbed and be very short. When one day the then King of Prussia was sitting to him, the King asked him if he could speak French (not German, strangely enough), the Scot answered sharply that he could not. "Ah," said the King, "you should, everybody should speak French." Philip retorted in his broad Scottish accent: "Not I, I've had quite enough trouble learnin' me own language!" In his studio one night after dinner he said to my father, "John, our friend Collie has made me a present of a thing which will interest

GEORGE MACDONALD AS MACBETH

To face p. 20

you," and he produced with loving care a hard tartan Stuart plaid, together with documents showing it had been worn by Prince Charlie while staying with the McIntoshes of Moyhall, and on his departure he had presented it to Lady McIntosh. Now this very plaid had come into the possession of my father's relative, Miss Johnston, of Badyfurra, and she had promised to leave it him in her will, which she failed to do. Amazed at the strange reappearance of the coveted relic of his boyish days, he told his old friend the history of the plaid. Philip was much interested, and after some further examination of the precious relic, it was carefully put away. The next morning a parcel was handed to my father by a messenger. It contained the plaid, with an affectionate note from Philip saying he was too shy to give it him then and there the night before ! The plaid, with its documents, now lie near me in a case containing other family treasures.

John Philip's career as a painter is perhaps unique. Until he went to Spain his work was painstaking, but hard and tight, and in no way remarkable. On his return from Spain, however, at about the age of thirty-nine, he soon became famous, and all the pictures that made him so were produced within ten years, for he died before he was fifty.

CHAPTER II

HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE. LIFE IN A PRESBYTERY

Monsier Godfroi—Miss Thackeray—Cardinal Bonnechose.

FOR OVER A PERIOD of six years, I was sent during the summer and sometimes the Christmas holidays to stay with a very celebrated priest in Normandy, Victor Godfroi. He was a great builder of convents and churches, and was the loved Curé of Notre Dame de Bonsécours, a Gothic sanctuary perched on a hill overlooking the Seine just outside Rouen.

The original very modest chapel of Bonsécours had been for many generations a celebrated place of pilgrimage. When Victor Godfroi was installed curé, he at once decided to build a shrine worthy of this renowned spot. The parishioners, however, protested on the ground that he might never be able to complete the structure—that their sacred chapel would be gone, and possibly leaving only a half-finished church in its place. The indomitable Norman, however, was not to be thwarted. He started raising the walls of the new Gothic church round the little chapel, and when the roof was on

A FAMILY GROUP.

To face p. 22.

he then pulled down the old building and drew it bit by bit through the west door.

The whole of the interior is rich in colour, after the style of that wonderful shrine the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, and the great altar is one blaze of gilt bronze.

The Presbytery of Bonsécours was an imposing building of brick and stone, with many bedchambers for the numerous priests who came visiting on the affairs of the Church, or to rest, for the Abbé Godfroi kept open house. On fête days there were often twelve or fourteen at table after High Mass, and I was a subject of curiosity to many, as coming from what they believed to be the land of eternal fog. It was hard to persuade tham that the sun did sometimes shine in London. My mistakes in French, I could see, were a source of great delight, but they often tried to hide the cause of their amusement by pretending they were laughing at some other matter. Once at a dinner party composed only of priests, there was one who pronounced on the importance of knowing languages, and wound up by saying, with a self-deprecatory gesture, that he would address me in English. He suddenly launched at me what sounded like "Tekanpaz." A bewildered face on my part caused a shout of laughter. The linguist was defeated ; he glared round the table, pointing to an object near me, and again said, "Tekanpaz," to be followed only by more bewilderment from myself, more roars of laughter from the others ; then, mopping his brow, he shouted the mysterious

word once again, to the general delight of all, when it dawned upon me that he was saying "take and pass." He wanted the mustard-pot!

How they spoilt me, those admirable men!

The curés of the country-side were my friends, and I was always made welcome to their modest homes, with their pretty gardens, in which they took such pride. Boys are quick at gauging character, and I am persuaded that of all the many priests it was my good fortune to meet and know, there was not one of them who was not pure in spirit and devoted to his high calling.

I do not know if it is the usual custom now with priests, but in those days the curés generally addressed each other not by their names, but by the names of their parishes. As a rule they spoke with elegance and distinction. Four only of the English authors came to their lips readily—Milton, Waltair Scott, Lorbeeron, and Shakaspeare! Of their own authors, their idols were, of course, Bossuet and Fénelon. During one of my visits an exciting incident interrupted the peace of the holy house.

From the cellars of the presbytery a subterranean passage led to the sacristy, very convenient on a wet day, and by this way came the sacristan one night (he always slept in the church) with the cry: "Aux voleurs, Monsieur le Curé." Thieves were breaking into the church! Being awakened by the disturbance, I opened my bedroom door, and there in the middle of the long white corridor was the head vicaire, with his winter coat over his night-

shirt, loading with great deliberation an enormous horse-pistol. "Allez vous coucher, mon enfant," said he, but there could be no bed for me with such an adventure toward. I soon joined a group composed of the three vicaires, the manservant, and the curé. The servant was in a great taking with a lantern in his hand. The vicaire, with his horse-pistol, wanted to lead the way, but I was inspired to take command, and persuaded them to let me head the procession with the light, that the heavy artillery might be free to see the naughty fellow, and let fly at him over my head.

This was the order of advance. Behind the boy and the lantern came the first vicaire, with his hand on the boy's shoulder, and the horse-pistol. Next came the curé with a broomstick, followed by the two other vicaires, one with a bottle of wine which he had snatched as a weapon when passing through the cellars, and the next with a brick ; the rear was brought up by the servant performing a dance of fright. And so streaming along the subterranean passage we crept up into the sacristy where, sure enough, was someone on the outside, hacking at the leaded glass, some of which had already been removed. A flanking movement was necessary. Round we went by the outer sacristy door and made a desperate charge, only in time to see dim figures in flight. We pursued, but for a very few yards, as it was found that the majority of the expeditionary force had been laid low by the fallen branches of a tree.

The next morning early the law, in the shape of a rotund and beaming garde-champêtre, was called upon to investigate. He came hot a-foot in his blouse from his vegetable garden. Being shown the broken glass, et cetera, he uttered : " Messieurs, c'est très grave, très grave, mais attendez un instant." With that he disappeared, returning in about half an hour tricked out in all the glory of his office. The white plume and his great cocked hat together measured more than half the length of his whole person. Both the tricolour sash and his sword belt were too short for the long-departed waist of him, so the sash was hooked well under the paunch and the sword belt under his armpits. The gauntlets of his great white gloves reached to his elbows. He was purple in the face, due to his tight-fitting stock. And yet we were impressed, he was so grave, so important. One realized it had been impossible for him to take notes of evidence in his big black portfolio without being in his uniform.

I had to tell him that I was English. " Ah ! " said he, " de Hangleterre ? Très intéressant," adding very quickly, with a grave, inimitable look, " Rosbeef godam I spik English." This elegant phrase, I am persuaded, was handed down from the time of the Napoleonic wars. The Norman peasant invariably spoke of our country as " le Hangleterre," nor was it the only case of a squeezed-in aspirate. I need hardly say, nothing ever came of this serious " sederunt " in the apple orchard of the farm abutting on the church. The big doors of that farm-yard,

by the way, still had holes in them through which a previous generation had fired at the wolves that would come from the forests in the winter months. But I must return to the curé of Bonsécours. He, Monsieur Godfroi, made the rounds of his very extensive parish in a neat little single brougham, drawn by a high-stepping grey of handsome proportions, a most unusual luxury for a curé, and I gathered that a few of the well-to-do parishioners looked askance at such indulgence in a parish priest. But their petty attitude troubled that wise and just autocrat not at all, and those who did not like it had to lump it. Dash about in his quiet, smart equipage, with his faithful coachman, Antoine, on the box, he did, in spite of them. This Antoine, by the way, not only groomed the horse and washed the carriage, but made the beds, dusted the rooms, valeted his master, polished the parquet floors with big brushes on his feet, waited at table, and looked after the wine cellar.

Everything about the curé was spick and span, from the precisely tied red ribbon which he wore as a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, to the silver buckles on his shoes. His soutane was of poplin, or some other silk-like material. The bands were daintily edged, not with white beads, as is the general custom, but with white lawn.

Sometimes he would take me with him to Rouen, maybe to see his architect about additions or improvements in the church or the presbytery. The disputations on these occasions were interesting. The

architect wanted one thing and the curé another, but no plans or dimensions or figures ever puzzled him, and with a rapid gesture his pencil would go over the plan of elevation, extending here and deleting there. Quick to decide, he knew exactly what he wanted, and always got it. In a short time he would be back in his brougham again, sitting quite upright, with his gloved hand on the window-sill, always punctiliously acknowledging the many salutations of the passers-by. Suddenly the brougham would be stopped, he had seen a hydrangea in a florist's shop. These flowers he could never resist. He had a passion for them. Out of the carriage he would get, and in a few moments the shrub was bought, placed in the front next Antoine, and we were off again, maybe to pass under La Grosse Horloge, or by Saint Ouen, chaste and pure, or the Palace of Justice, or the noble cathedral.

One of M. Godfroi's parishioners was Miss Thackeray, a daughter of General Thackeray, who was cousin to the author. She once told me, I remember, with much amusement, that her people in her girlhood were very disturbed, indeed shocked, when they found that Makepeace had actually taken to writing for a living ! She was most popular in the neighbourhood, but the dear country folk could never master her name, so they settled the matter by addressing her as Mademoiselle Mees Tack. Many happy hours did I spend in her house, where she encouraged me to attend to my music lessons, but I fear, alas, to little purpose. Some years ago

she moved down into Rouen, and went daily up and down two flights of stairs, doing her shopping, writing with a clear hand, and entertaining our soldier boys during the war at the age of ninety.

Two striking figures always to be seen at High Mass were the Monsieurs Auchamps, twin brothers, who lived by themselves in a quaint old château-like house at the foot of the high hill of Bonsécours. Their garden swept down to broad steps giving to the Seine. Every Sunday morning they climbed the hill-side in weather wet or fine. These distinguished ancient gentlemen, for they had seen eighty years, retained the garb of their younger days in the shape of body coats, white ducks in summer, high white neck cloths and enormously tall beaver hats. Each had his stall in the choir, and each put a louis in the plate every Sunday in the year. I was always welcome to their orchard-like garden, in which the brothers worked the day long, and from whence I could catch at nearer view the traffic of the Seine.

There was, I remember, a queer-looking boat plying between Rouen and Paris in those days, which did the whole distance by picking up a heavy chain from the bed of the river, and so pulling herself along. The chain came over her bows, then passed round a drum in the centre of the boat, and was paid out over the stern. She made a snail-like passage and was very noisy, but the twins thought no end of her.

From the garden I could see to the right on an island a modest, shabby little establishment dignified

with the resounding title of l'École de Natation, set up in bold characters on a board which was certainly bigger than all its bathing cabins put together. Here I learnt to swim. Though the whole place, mainly consisting of a barge, was very primitive, the instructors had an admirable method of teaching. At every lesson the pupil was first laid extended, face down on a pad about three feet from the ground. One man seized the wrists and another the ankles, they then moved the limbs in the correct time and action of swimming, with a shouting of "Un, deux, trois," for about five or six minutes, after which the pupil was allowed to get into the water, with a rope under the arms, when the shouting was renewed. These rack-like movements were applied with considerable energy, and when first put through them there came a hint from me that perhaps they were rather violent. I was answered, "Ah mais, vous savez mon petit Monsieur que dans l'École de Natation c'est comme ça"—this with great importance—and "comme ça" it had to be. I soon, however, found the benefit of this stretching out farther, for I was able to keep myself afloat without aid in about four or five lessons.

Monsieur Godfroi had a niece, a Mademoiselle Barrochée, a gracious old dame who lived at Falaise with whom he was in the habit of spending a few days every year. One day I got an invitation from the old lady to accompany her uncle on his coming visit. To my great delight the curé decided that I should make the journey in advance of him

by road in his smart little brougham, in charge of Marie the cook and Antoine. Thus I got a taste of what the old posting days must have been like. From Rouen to Falaise is near upon a hundred miles. For some distance we went down the valley of the Seine, then going due west, staying for the night at Pont Audunes. The next day we made Lisieux. At both places we found rambling and ancient inns, where were such soft beds and such cooking as was never known ! What with the appearance of the big grey mare, the spick and span carriage, and the attentions of Marie and Antoine, my advent to an hotel caused considerable flutterings on the part of beaming landladies and their bowing spouses, who waited on me to my chamber. I afterwards discovered, through Marie and Antoine, that, much to their delight, I was taken for some little Milord Anglais, and the impression I got was, that they did not discourage the illusion, but very much the reverse ! In short, there was a general adulation all round, and didn't I enjoy it !

After three days my royal progress ended at Falaise in Mademoiselle Barrochée's beautiful old house near the towering and majestic castle in which William the Norman was born.

The curé had arrived before me by train, with his secretary, a priest who had been in the Pontifical Zouaves. The next morning I was up betimes to serve Monsieur Godfroi's Mass as usual. Now, on this particular morning, I took it into my head that as the curé fasted before saying Mass, it was only

proper that I should in future do likewise. Marie protested, but I got my way. I had not, however, been long on my knees on the altar steps, when things went round, and on coming to I found myself lying on a bench in the orchard outside the chapel door, with two nuns bending over me in a great taking. There was an awful row, with Marie in tears, and no more fasting on my part was allowed.

In the evenings I was sometimes permitted to take a hand at cards, when I was initiated into the mysteries of a game called Boston. As I remember, it was on the lines of whist. On the card-table lay a prettily coloured sheet showing the different values, which appeared to be rather complicated, as the players studiously referred to it at the end of a game, with much chatter, when they were in any doubt as to how they stood. Indeed it struck me that they were none of them very familiar with the game of Boston.

One evening the ex-Zouave, who was one of the card-party, met with a disaster. On rising from the card-table, his soutane clung to the velvet seat of the high-backed Henri Quatre chair on which he had been sitting, and tipped it over with a crash to the floor. The beautiful carved back was broken from the seat! Covered with confusion the poor man did an odd thing. Having replaced the chair, now only a stool, he took up the broken back and held it for some moments in its place on the seat, at which we all laughed. As it seemed to me, it was in the unhappy man's mind that the catastrophe

FRANCES FORBES-ROBERTSON, THE MOTHER
OF J. F.-R., 1863.

J. F.-R., AGED TEN.
A drummer in an amateur brass band.

To face p. 32.

could not possibly be a fact, but only an illusion of the brain, and did he but hold the broken pieces together long enough, the precious chair would once more be whole, and all well !

I led a healthy life at the presbytery. Café au lait with rolls and butter at seven alone in a little salle à manger, served M. le Curé's Mass at eight, Latin and French lessons at nine, luncheon at twelve in the grande salle à manger with all the priests, and dinner at seven. I retired to bed at nine, and always from the window of my little white room could hear the couvre-feu sounded by the drums and trumpets of the soldiers of Rouen, down in the valley. I knew the words of the martial refrain they played : " As-tu vu la casquette—la casquette—as-tu vu la casquette de Père Buret ? " It appears that General Buret, in the time of Napoleon, had led his men in a sudden early morning sortie from the camp to a successful fight. When marching back the men discovered their General, in his haste, had forgotten to remove his night-cap. These sounds were dear to me, for I knew many of the officers and men at the barracks. Three times a week I took lessons in fencing from the maître d'armes, a gorgeous and enormous man exactly like the elder Dumas. Often I had bouts with the officers, many of whom were laid low a few years after in the war contrived by the criminal Bismarck.

On one occasion I was witness of a duel between officers who, stripped to the waist, fought in a cellar of the caserne. It was a long, flashing affair, but at

the first sight of blood the maître d'armes jumped in upon them, crying, " Assez, messieurs." It was quite understood the fight was not to be a l'outrance —a better method of settling disputes than the idiotic habit of the Germans, slashing at each other's faces, making them look in after years as if they had suffered from some horrible disease.

The wife of the maître d'armes was one of the most beautiful creatures I have ever seen. When I first went to inquire about having lessons she was standing all in white on the top of the outside stairway leading to their rooms, and to my statement : " Madame, je voudrais apprendre l'escrime," she, in a slightly reproving thrush-like voice, said : " Vous voulez dire apprendre les armes ! " In after years I knew her double in Mrs. William Morris.

I found I was expected to salute the guard at the gates of the caserne. One morning the sergeant asked to look at the brooch in my Highland bonnet, and to my wonder he instantly translated the Latin legend that encircled the crest, and highly approved the sentiment in " Virtutis gloria merces."

Thus was I grounded in the use of the foil with officers and men, and a kinder, more well-mannered, and cheerier set of fellows I have never met. The " joie de vivre " was in them, as it was in the priest and peasant. Seldom did one come across a surly look or uncouth answer while tramping the country roads of Normandy. Often have I got a lift from a farmer's wife in her market cart, and one, quite a friend of mine, said, as she was driving her market

cart laden with chickens, butter, eggs, and vegetables down to the boat at Honfleur, which was bound for Newhaven, "You cursed English, you take all my produce," and with a roar of laughter, she urged her big Normandy grey to handsome collar-work upon a rising road against the wooded hill. But this incident was in after years. She wore a Normandy bonnet, then still in common use, and very beautiful some of them were. On Sundays at High Mass the Normandy caps conspicuously peppered the great congregation with snow-white dots. The shapes were most varied, and determined by the district—goffered, pleated, befrilled, and belaced.

The small landed gentry, some still holding their ancient châteaux, though living only in restricted portions maybe, still maintained the fine flavour of their race, with a close fellowship, a hearty sympathy toward their tenants, which was good to witness. One, whose château was all gone long ago, had three or four rooms in one of his tenant's farm-houses, which he and two or three of his family used for a day or so now and again. They were always reserved by the farmer for the advent of his beloved lord from Rouen, and ready for the family at any and all times. I recall one room hung with some fine tapestry, the sole remains of pre-Revolution times. On one occasion I was taken by my host to these farm-house rooms, and we went out one day for a ceremony which always ended the gathering of the harvest. A small bunch of wheat was left uncut in the centre of the only remaining field to be garnered,

and this, artfully bound with ribbons, stood erect. Upon me, as the guest, came the honour of using the sickle on the corn for the last time that year. I remember being filled with the solemnity of the undertaking. The reapers, the farmer, and his stalwart boys and girls, mingled with the dainty women folk of my host (I was desperately in love with one of them), stood around, some all aglow, between the long blue shadows cast by a low sun. On one knee, and with bared head, I cut the strands and held the bunch of wheat aloft. The cry of "Oh le jeune anglais, comme il est gentil!" reached my ears, and I was made to have a fine conceit of myself!

Came all too quickly the morning of farewell, and I and my modest portmanteau were hoisted to the high seat up by the driver of the diligence, to be rumbled back some thirty miles to the presbytery, soon to return to England, but not for long, as it turned out. Suddenly came the news that Victor Godfroi had passed away. My people were urged by his immediate friends to allow me to be present at his funeral.

In sad haste I returned, and was in time to pay the last tribute to this great and good man. I found him lying in state in the hall of his presbytery, with a long stream of folk, gentle and simple, passing to take a last look at their well-beloved pastor. They remembered that no temptation of any preferment could draw him from the service of Notre Dame de Bonsécours, for though a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour, and a Chanoine of Lorette, a simple

curé he remained. But pomp and circumstance attended him at the last, for Monseigneur Bonnechose, Cardinal Archbishop of Rouen, gave the funeral oration at the full Mass, and the sharp order, "Present arms!" from the officer commanding an escort of soldiers, rang out at the elevation of the Host. Vividly I recall the impressive ceremony. The whole church was draped in black velvet and silver up to the spring of the arches. There in his robes lay my friend under the great black catafalque, at each corner of which stood a high bronze candelabrum giving forth many tongued torch-like flames. In the stalls of the choir knelt priests and bishops in their varied robes. Up through the centre of the nave, round the catafalque, and right up to the altar, were the soldiers at attention. The one strong point of vivid colour was the Cardinal in his scarlet as he delivered a poetic oration from the pulpit. Clouds of incense rose from many swinging censers, which spread a semi-opaque opalescence over the whole scene. Proudly I took a small share in this imposing tribute to my dear friend, for I carried the Archbishop's mitre, which I fear must have been somewhat tarnished by my tears.

After the ceremony I was sent for by the Cardinal, who received me with a graceful consideration for my distress. He had evidently been told I was not of his Church, for he was curious to know how it was my people sent me to live with Monsieur Godfroi. I replied that they were liberal-minded, and had perfect confidence in his influence and

guidance, and that I had been very happy at the presbytery. Not any direct word came from him as to whether I wished to enter the Church of Rome, but suddenly he said, "Soon after the Reformation the Protestant Church broke up into many sects and denominations, and they increased as time went on. Have you any idea as to how many there are?" "No," said I. Then with the slightest of sarcasm in his tone, he said, "Neither have I." There was a pause, and then, looking at me very fixedly, he continued: "Therein lies the weakness of your Church; almost from its birth it was unable to hold together, as our Church has done." Then he changed the subject, and put me many and various questions which, in answering, I addressed him as Monsieur at times, quickly changing to Monseigneur, at which he laughed and said it did not matter.

It was said that the Cardinal had been somewhat jealous of the power and influence of the man whose funeral oration he had so beautifully given. Well, on looking back, I conclude he was something of the Manning type. He certainly resembled that astute and worldly prelate in feature. A very thin, austere, and ascetic face, the pupils of his eyes of so pale a grey that they seemed almost to melt into the white. His brother the historian was a free-thinker. Strangely enough, a brother of the saintly Newman was the same, I believe.

The next time I visited my friends at Bonsécours was about three or four months after the Hun had left France bleeding and robbed. England at that

time was, Heaven only knows why, mainly pro-German. We were led to believe that the behaviour of Hun soldiery was all through the war exemplary! I had not, however, been long with my friends before my eyes were opened. At first the poor priests were not willing to speak of what they and their people in the country round had had to put up with, but by degrees I got out of them all the filthy tale.

To take the experiences of the priests alone. Some six or eight Hun officers had quartered themselves on the presbytery, and their behaviour was revolting. They were drunk all the time, and of course on the wine filched from the curé's cellar. Their custom was to mix various kinds of wines and liqueurs in a large bowl and drink till they vomited on the carpets, and then begin drinking again! Very many civilians in Normandy were shot in cold blood, and every sort of degradation was put upon the people. Their behaviour was appalling. Had they not been so swiftly successful in 1870, but had met with more difficulties, they would have been a thousand times worse than they were. Why the existence of these horrors was not realized in England is hard to understand. The only explanation is, that what did filter through was not believed, and the rest was by the influence of the Germans and the pro-Germans in this country suppressed. Anyway, the majority in England undoubtedly backed the wrong horse with their sympathies.

I remember my father's prophetic statement to

me at the time. These were his exact words : " We have allowed these Prussians to rob and humiliate Denmark, we have stood by and watched them do the same to our natural ally France. They are now going back to Berlin to take measures to rob and humiliate us. I may not live to see it, but you are certain to do so."

CHAPTER III

THE THEATRE ROYAL BACK DRAWING-ROOM

Ford Madox Brown—Frederick Sandys—Alma Tadema—Rossetti—Swinburne.

I NOW RETURN to the year 1866. The crossing of the Channel by Dieppe and Newhaven, a matter of never less than six hours in those days (with me on one occasion it was eighteen), I looked upon always as a sort of immeasurable gap of time and distance between two distinct lives. The French life, full of colour and romance, and wanderings for the most part at my own sweet will—the English, after the joy of meeting my people, full of school anxieties and other troubles always in wait, it would seem, for the eldest of a large family. On the whole, however, handicapped as the eldest child is in many ways, he has a measure of authority in the republic of the home, and so when I hinted that I should like to give a performance at Christmas time of *Macbeth*, my mad proposal was not looked upon with disfavour. The play came off, and was mainly remarkable for comic interludes, such as the uncertain behaviour of my brother Norman, aged six, one of the guests at the banquet, rolling

off the hassock on which he was seated at the entrance of the ghost of Banquo. We anticipated the whole question of simple decoration, so much desired and sought after in these days, for the stage was draped in folds with long curtains, there being only three entrances, right and left and in the centre, through which some of us would bounce abruptly on to the stage at the cue. The Scottish and English armies entered in this way, composed respectively of my two brothers, Ian and Norman. A fearsome fight ensued, and then two pairs of little legs prone appeared from under the curtains, the bodies "off." All this goes to show that the playing of a great tragedy may easily be made into a most diverting Christmas entertainment when done in grave earnest by children.

The next year it must needs be *Hamlet*, with a more decided note of firmness in the acting, and an augmented company. The boy who played the King, however, got his tongue in a knot in the last act and said: "And in this cup an onion shall we throw." My sister Ida doubled the parts of Ophelia and the grave-digger. When the curtain went up on the grave-digger kneeling behind a piece of board covered with a rug, there was an outburst of unseemly hilarity on the discovery that Ophelia was digging her own grave! My mother made me a comely dress, but we had not allowed in the fashioning of it for my sitting down, and so alack the day, whenever I did so, there was a sad hiatus between a pair of her own black stockings, which were my hose, and my velvet tunic!

Several literary and artistic lights were in front. Madox Brown and his wife, Thornycroft and his family, Alma Tadema, Rossetti, Sir Richard Garnet, Mr. and Mrs. George MacDonald, Carl Blind, Sir Thomas and Lady Duffus Hardy, and lying on the floor in front of them all, close to "the floats," Swinburne, who disconcerted me somewhat by lowly chanting the lines in his melodious voice in unison with mine.

The young Swinburne was the much beloved of all who came under his charm. No one could resist his youthful enthusiasm. Buoyant and elastic, blue-eyed, with long ruddy auburn hair, a slight moustache, a long neck, and sloping shoulders, he had a trick of rising on his toes and holding to the lapels of his coat, or moving his hands in quick gyrations with arms straightened to his sides when excited in conversation, the words rushing from him in torrents with a baffling rapidity. Years after, when I first met Paderewski, he reminded me in general appearance of the former in his youth, except that Paderewski's face was of a stronger and firmer mould. Swinburne's nose was what is called Roman, his chin disappeared into his neck, indeed the profile was very weak, but the full face had great beauty, those clear blue eyes, the bluest I ever saw, beaming with a winning and frank expression. He was very much alive to the little pleasures of life. Once on watching with great enjoyment the lissom antics of a kitten that had invaded the library, he declared it had "the grace of a thousand virgins!"

Sometimes of an afternoon he would come very tired to our house, and at such times would get very excited on one glass of claret. Then it was that my mother, whom he adored, would take him in hand, as if he were one of her own children. She would lead him to a couch, oblige him to lie down, and cover him with a rug or one of her shawls. His delight in young children was unbounded, nor did he hesitate to face a crying babe. I remember on an occasion my sister Frances, being about three months old, was using her lungs to some purpose as she was being carried up the stairs from the garden. Swinburne heard the child's cry, and hastening out of the room to the nurse's side, said, "Give her to me, she will be good at once." He took the babe, who was instantly quiet, and he carried her up three flights of stairs to the nursery! Mrs. Frances Harrod, the novelist, was the child. He took great pleasure in reading aloud, and I have a vivid recollection of his declaiming the whole of Webster's *Vittoria Corombona* one evening to my mother and father and myself as audience. Another night it was *The Duchess of Malfii*. On that occasion, as it was getting very late, my mother skilfully broke up the "sederunt" before the last act of the tragedy. On my father taking him to the door with much talk of the glories of the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, Swinburne suddenly cried out, "Oh, we haven't killed the Duchess, we must go back and kill the Duchess," but that had to be for another night.

Just before *Atalanta in Calydon* was published,

Swinburne proposed to read it to my people and a few friends, so, one night, he spread the manuscript before him, and in a sort of chant, read the poem to some fifteen or twenty in my mother's drawing-room. I can see the faces of the audience now all lit up with their delight and enthusiasm, as the beauty of the work was unfolded by the young poet. There was a scene of the greatest enthusiasm as he closed the manuscript. This method of chanting, by the way, when reading aloud, was common to Rossetti and to Payne and O'Shaughnessy. These three, as I remember, were at the reading, together with Mr. and Mrs. Madox Brown, Sir Thomas and Lady Duffus Hardy, John A. Heraud, Joseph Knight, Dr. Brewer the historian, and others.

Dr. Brewer once told me of an exercise for the speaking voice, which seems to me well worth setting down. It was on an evening when I had had the temerity to read a scene or two from *King Lear* to some friends in my mother's drawing-room, that he led me to the piano, and striking a very low note, said, "Now speak a line of six or seven words on that note, *don't sing* them, speak them. For instance, let's try the words, 'Angels and ministers of grace, defend us.'" This I did, and then he took me from note to note as high as it was possible for me to speak on the note he struck. Said he, "You must practise to extend your speaking register just as a singer does his notes, that you may get flexibility and variety of tone and thereby free your voice from monotony of delivery." The difficulty, of course,

was not to sing the words, but after some trials I was able to sound the spoken word on the particular note without singing it. I found the exercise of great help, especially in long sustained passages, and carried on the practice for many years.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti often came to our house. His personality was very striking, remarkable, and indeed unique. I do not remember ever to have seen anyone in the least like him with his big, grave brown eyes and his high forehead. Few wrinkles lined his pale face, which would glow under excitement. His full lips were slightly veiled by his dark moustache ; the beard was short and forked, and nearly black, as was the curly hair. His frame was firm and somewhat massive, and he stood about five feet nine.

When he was painting his picture of " Dante's Dream," or, as he then called it, " Dante's love kissing Beatrice," he asked my father to let me sit to him for the head of the young Eros, which I did. As I remember, most of the picture was finished. There was Mrs. William Morris as Beatrice, and the right-hand maiden holding the drapery above the body of Beatrice was the beautiful Miss Spartali, who later married Mr. Stillman, an American of great distinction and charm. The part of the canvas where the head of Love was to come had been scumbled over with venetian red, and into this foundation he painted my profile. To get the pose, I had to lean over a cushion on a couch. At the first sitting I remember he said, " I am sorry, my

dear Johnston, there is no beautiful creature for you to kiss." I can feel my youthful blushes now! The head was painted in three sittings, each of about an hour's duration. At this time Rossetti was finishing his picture of the country youth finding his lost sweetheart in the suburbs of London. The name he gave this beautiful and poignant work was "Found." I remember that on his showing me the picture, he told me that he had got a butcher-boy to sit for the country lad and that Rossetti had asked him if he could tell him the story of the picture. It gave him the greatest satisfaction when the lad said he understood the whole of the tragic incident. "That tells me the picture is right; it is a success, a picture of that character should tell its own tale and need no explanation," said Rossetti.

Someone asked Rossetti how he managed to get such lovely models. "Well," said he, "often on a wet day I stand at the window watching the passers-by, and if I chance to see a beautiful creature, I rush out and say: 'I'm a painter, I want you to sit to me.' Sometimes they scream, then I rush in and slam the door!"

The house in Cheyne Walk was full of beautiful and costly things. The walls of the drawing-room were covered with willow pattern china, and the hangings were of pale lemon colour, an effect most striking and original in those days. In the studio and hall were many drawings and pictures, mostly by his friends, such as Sandys and Madox Brown.

Frederick Sandys was an interesting figure in

many ways ; an admirable talker and most companionable—very spick and span in his dress, indeed somewhat of a dandy. He was tall and handsome, and as for his art, well, he was a far finer artist than he ever got credit for being. This consummate draftsman was a thriftless creature, with a weakness for silk socks and fine linen, but seldom had the means to meet his haberdasher's bill. One wet night he and an attractive rascal, who at one time had been secretary to Ruskin, called on Rossetti with the object of getting the wherewithal to satisfy the haberdasher and others. Rossetti was not willing, but being anxious to help his friend, said, " My dear fellow, what you must do is to go to America, and paint the beautiful creatures there. Now what I will do is this : I will give you the money to pay your passage, you will go to the States, and your fortune is made." This did not suit Sandys in the least. The subject was dropped, and they passed a pleasant evening. On the way home, trudging through the wet streets with his friend in gloomy silence, Sandys suddenly said, " You know, Rossetti is such a fool, of course if one had the money to go to America, one wouldn't go ! "

Rossetti was very devoted to Madox Brown, who helped him in his paintings when he was a beginner. He was often at gatherings in the studio of Madox Brown's house, whither came William Morris and his stately and beautiful wife, Montcure Conway, Swinburne, Joaquin Miller, William Rossetti and his sister Christina, Alma Tadema, Sidney Colvin, Charles

Leland ("Hans Breitmann"), Carl Blind (whose son was imprisoned by the Prussians for his advanced views, and secretly put to death, it was said, by the authorities) and Miss Mathilde Blind, William Bell Scott, Edmund Gosse, and many other hard-working men and women of note.

The house at which all these people who did so much to mould and influence their own and later times foregathered, is in the middle of the south side of Fitzroy Square—the house with the large stone urn over the front door.

Madox Brown was the idol of all who knew him. Full of sweetness and light and wisdom and hard work. His appearance was imposing and his manner of the courtliest. When I first knew him his hair was a light brown, slightly touched with grey, parted in the middle, straight and rather long, as was his beard. His face was ruddy, the features bold and well modelled. His genius as a painter was appreciated only by a few, but his art will live, and there are far more now who understand and admire his work than ever there were in his own day. The Tate Gallery is fortunate in having one of his masterpieces, "Christ washing the feet of Peter," and Manchester possesses his mural paintings which so nobly decorate its Municipal Hall. It was at Madox Brown's house that Alma Tadema first met the lady who was to become his wife. He had met Madox Brown at my father's house, who asked him to come to one of his evenings, which he did. I chanced to be present on that particular evening, and saw the

great Dutchman introduced to Miss Epps. It was evident, to my youthful eyes, that he was most certainly captured, and no wonder, for she was a strikingly radiant young lady.

Very soon after, she became Mrs. Alma Tadema and the gracious hostess of hospitable gatherings of the musical, literary, and painting world in their house overlooking the Regent's Park. The house was decorated under Tadema's personal care, and I recall his watching with envy one of the house painters who, with a long thin brush, was painting with swift ease and unfaltering accuracy a long fine line down the wall, when Tadema turned to me saying, "Look at him! Confound the man, how I wish I could do that!" This house was later uncomfortably disturbed by a great explosion of gunpowder in a barge on the Regent's Canal, the vibration of which was felt for miles round, and Tadema and his family moved to the house he made celebrated in the Grove End Road, where his decorations were even more elaborate and original, and where he and Lady Tadema, helped by his gifted daughters, once more entertained weekly all the celebrities in the art world.

The house had been an ordinary stucco building so familiar in that neighbourhood, which I had known in the days when James Tissot had it and gave breakfasts to his friends in its pretty garden. Tissot's pictures had a great vogue in those days, with their lovely, dainty ladies, and young exquisites, generally garbed in the costume of the latter part of

the eighteenth century, with often a background in which ships' masts were viewed from an upper window, with all the delicate lacings of the riggings and spars faithfully depicted. Tissot was quite the man of fashion, handsome, and somewhat of a dandy in his dress. He eventually became very religious, so much so indeed that he painted Biblical subjects only, and when he died it was found he had left the bulk of his money to the Church of Rome.

Hard upon the ambitious efforts in the Theatre Royal back drawing-room that I have dwelt on came my first appearance on a public stage, made in the old Town Hall of Woodstock. Local Shakespearian enthusiasts had decided to give the trial scene from the *Merchant of Venice*. I chanced at the time to be on a visit to an uncle who lived in the town, and was forthwith recruited into the company and given the part of Antonio. Two performances were given, the rehearsals and preparations for which were all very wonderful in my youthful eyes. Nor was my ardour damped by the extraordinary nature of the costumes—Portia flaunted it in a bath-robe—nor by the criticisms of a farmer's wife of generous proportions, who remarked that she did not know where Shylock was to get the pound of flesh from that young man !

The much vexed question of Bassanio not recognizing his Portia in the young advocate was settled on this occasion at least, for Portia was enacted by a male in a bristling moustache !

The rector played the Doge, and my uncle was

an excellent Shylock. All went well until the lines : "Are there balance here to weigh the flesh ?"—"I have them ready." Upon which my uncle, evidently a confirmed realist, produced a huge pair of copper scales borrowed from the local grocer. The recognition of the so familiar object by the hitherto absorbed audience was too much for them, and they burst into unseemly mirth !

Incidentally the Shylock was in real life a confirmed Radical. He had a glove factory, but, bless the man, in that institution he was an out-and-out autocrat. This combination of radicalism and autocracy my youthful mind could not fathom, nor in my maturer years, having come across many cases of a like nature, have I yet succeeded in doing so.

CHAPTER IV

ART STUDENT DAYS

Samuel Butler—Christine Nilsson—Aimée Desclée—Frank Holl—Frederick Walker—E. M. Ward—Frederick Leighton.

It was Rossetti who, on seeing some efforts of mine in oil-colour at my father's house, advised him to let me take up painting, and eventually, at the age of sixteen, I was sent to Heatherly's in Newman Street, to draw from the Antique, to the end that I might compete for a studentship at the Royal Academy. In the course of about a year my drawings were accepted, and I became a student at the R.A. and had the advantage of the best training in art that England could afford.

At Heatherly's I made several lasting friendships —Mrs. Jopling Rowe (then Mrs. Romer), Percy Macquoid, Nettleship, the animal painter, Yeats, the father of the poet, and another, my special friend, a strange and most original character, who was very anxious to become an Academy student. He sent in his drawings several times, but they were never passed. He maintained there was only one great musical composer, and he was Handel, and only one great poet, and he was Shakespeare, and jokingly declared he played and read these only. He was a

shy man and hated social gatherings. He always wore rough homespun and thick boots, and his hair and beard were cut quite close, the face was short and the complexion ruddy. The eyes could snap and sparkle and they could beam with sympathy. His voice was sweet and low, his laugh quite infectious, and those few who knew him loved the man. Any of them who may read my very bald picture of him will nevertheless jump at my dear friend's name. It was Samuel Butler.

We used to adjourn for a midday meal at an ordinary over a public-house called The Horse Shoe, at the corner of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road ; the meal cost tenpence or one-and-twopence at the most. One day he handed me a small volume, saying, " Here is a book I have written, my first, just out, I should like your father to read it." I was much surprised, having no idea he had any literary ambition, as he was so keen on painting. The book was *Erewhon*, and my father and mother were carried away by it, and asked many questions about my friend, whom they had not met. To my delight I was able to say to him a day or two after : " Sam, my people say you are a great writer ! " We had quite a banquet at the ordinary that day ! I remember his having a mind one day to take a photograph of me in a suit of armour Heatherly had in his back room. Thither some of us adjourned to assist in the proceedings. There was much ado to get the armour on me, as most of them insisted that the gorget should come over the breastplate,

Photo by] [*Samuel Butler.*

J. F.-R. AT SEVENTEEN.

To face p. 54.

which Butler and I knew was wrong. Such a fuss there was, with much gesticulation and vain chattering, Butler meanwhile calm and smiling amid the storm. Slowly he got a hearing, and with great deliberation and softly smiling all the while, he gave them a lecture, full of biting sarcasm, proving that he knew more about armour and the proper wearing of it than all of them put together. They were set down as naught, and, buckling me up correctly, he at last took the photograph.

These happy daily hobnobs with this philosopher, artist, and literary giant happened over fifty years ago, and very slowly, year by year since, has his name crept up into the minds of men. He was before his time, and only within the last few years has he come by his own, thanks mainly to Festing Jones, Bernard Shaw, and a few other literary men who were long ago alive to his greatness and lovingly nursed the flame of his genius.

After I left Heatherly's to become a student at the Royal Academy, I regret to say I saw less of him, and then not at all ; my own fault and my great loss ! Thoughtless, vain, unheeding youth !

We were a " hard-up " lot at Heatherly's, but full of the joy of life. We would indulge in the play or the opera at times from the gallery. On seeing Christine Nilsson as Marguerite for the first time, I expressed my delight to a fellow-student, a Scot. " Man," said he, " wait till the end of the prison scene, it will just oblige ye to rise and kick yon body on your left."

But our great joy was the incomparable Aimée Desclée, then playing at the Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street. If ever a woman cast a spell on her whole audience, this woman did. What she would have done in the classic drama I do not know, but her acting in modern domestic tragedy and comedy has to my mind never been equalled. Desclée was the supreme and absolute mistress of her art. She knew so well what to leave out, if one may so express it. Everything was incomparably simple, and it all looked as if it were so easy to do. Never did she descend to mere theatrical effects. She had no tricks and no mannerisms, was a realist, but with a complete sense of beauty in movement and gesture, and had great distinction. Her figure was lithe and graceful. The face was oval, most expressive and alluring. Some of the plays she gave were not of a very elevating character, but this did not matter—she was the grand interpreter, and all she touched became golden. Desclée was long neglected by the Paris managers, but one night Dumas the younger chanced to see her in some provincial theatre, and insisted upon this unknown woman being engaged to play Frou-Frou, which was about to be produced in Paris. *Frou-Frou* was a remarkable play and an epoch maker of its kind. Of all the women who have played the part, the one that came nearest to Desclée in after years was Modjeska.

During my student days I had advice from Walter Ouless, who soon was to earn fame as a portrait painter. He showed me the importance of getting

the broad general masses of a head at the first stages of painting, and put off handling detail as long as possible, in order that the main proportions might be thoroughly fixed.

A master in this particular was the great painter Frank Holl, whom it was my privilege to know well. His male portraits have never been equalled since his time, and whenever one appears in a public gallery, which they do at rare intervals, the modern portraits, no matter by whom, "pale their ineffectual fires." Of a rather grave temperament, which was reflected in most of his subject pictures, he had eagle-like eyes, quick and observant, with a singular charm and simplicity of manner, very modest and retiring. His capacity for work was enormous, which capacity, alas, he overtaxed, and at the very zenith of his fame he passed away.

At the Royal Academy Schools I was fortunate in the group of young men who were of my set. Many have become famous. We were all ambitious and hard-working, and all persuaded we should become R.A.'s at least, as indeed several did, notably Hamo Thornycroft, Frank Dicksee, Adrian Stokes, Alfred Gilbert, E. J. Gregory, J. W. Waterhouse, W. L. Wyllie, and John M. Swan.

There was a very quiet, retiring student, popular with us all, known as "The Duke of Buckingham." This name was given him by Percy Macquoid. But "the Duke" in after years proved his metal, for Frederic Villiers won world-wide fame as a fearless and intrepid war artist in countless fields of battle.

Eccentricity of costume, for which art students were accused of having a weakness, was taboo in our set, but there was one who adhered to the correct student garb laid down by Thackeray. It consisted of a brown velveteen short jacket, a black flowing bow tie, a waistcoat cut low, and tight-fitting lavender-coloured trousers ! The hair, very straight in this particular case, was worn long. Charles Landseer, then the master in the Antique school, once offered this student a shilling, saying, " Forgive me that I venture to offer you this trifle to get your hair cut."

One day Landseer was looking at the drawing of a new student, a pretty young lady, very tall and slim, called Guinness, and on reading her name on the corner of the drawing-board he looked her up and down, and said, " Guinness, Guinness—any relation to the stout party ? "

The schools are visited by one of the R.A.'s twice weekly, each one taking a month in the painting school. Classes for drawing from the nude are held in the evening. Millais and Leighton were often visitors, Orchardson, Pettie, Tom Faed, and Frith. Once came the idealist, Frederick Walker, a dapper, shy little man, but an admirable instructor. Perhaps the best teacher of them all at that time was E. M. Ward, whose historical pictures hang in the House of Lords, and by whose son Leslie, better known as Spy, everybody was only too pleased to be caricatured. This system of changing visitors from month to month has, I am sure, an admirable effect

upon the students : it prevents them arriving too early at a settled style, and gives them a broad and catholic outlook on the art.

The various schools comprise painting school, the architectural school, the modelling and decorative painting schools. Classes for perspective and anatomy are held ; there is an art library, and lectures are given regularly. There are many prizes, gold and silver medals, money prizes and travelling studentships, and the summer and winter exhibitions are free to the students. Attacks from various quarters have been levelled at the Royal Academy. Grumblers maintained that it was a close borough and the right men were not elected, and that favouritism was shown by the Hanging Committee. Now a more fair-minded body of men, less prejudiced, less jealous of rising talent, less given to favouritism cannot be found. If an outsider sends up a good picture, it gets hung, and well hung. Those elected have been, with rare exceptions, the best men of their time. There are a very few isolated cases in the history of the Royal Academy where a strong man has been passed over, and then it has generally been due to the fact that he has neglected to submit his pictures for exhibition.

The long and short of the whole matter is that the best this country can produce in the arts is represented at the Royal Academy Exhibitions, and the body of the R.A.'s and A.R.A.'s is recruited from the best men. It is a great and admirably conducted institution, of which the country may well be proud.

Sir Francis Grant was the President when I first entered the Academy Schools, soon to be followed by Sir Frederick Leighton, afterwards Lord Leighton, who was unceasing in his labours to bring the work of the students up to a high standard. His beautiful studio was always open to them, and he was ever ready with advice and help. Nothing was too good for the student, and the many reforms he introduced into the schools were of great benefit. His method of work was most thorough and painstaking. The figures in his subject pictures were always modelled in wax or clay, about six inches high, prior to starting the composition, and endless preparation studies were the rule.

I remember calling upon him once to ask him for a letter for a friend to someone in Florence, upon which he took his handkerchief from his pocket, tied a knot in the corner, and, holding it up, said, "That will remind me." During my visit he turned to a very large canvas of his on the wall, representing the Day of Judgment. It was by no means one of his best pictures, but strangely enough he said to me: "Robertson, that is the picture by which I should like to be remembered."

In speaking of Leighton, Millais once said this strange thing to me: "We all love and respect him, but none of us really know the man." He was very public-spirited, and, amongst other things, was responsible for the formation of the Artists' Corps, of which he was long the Colonel.

My father, who had himself been a member of

the London Scottish in its earliest days under that enthusiast, Lord Elcho, had always impressed upon his sons the vital importance of every young man being taught to bear arms, that, if need be, he might serve his country, so that when we came to be old enough we took it as a matter of course that we should become volunteers. Four of us were enrolled in the Artists', and later on I was able to recruit six or eight actors, the late Kyrle Bellew being one.

In the Corps were several who in after years became shining lights. Of that number were J. W. Waterhouse, R.A., Hamo Thornycroft, R.A., Walter Ouless, R.A., Walter Horsley and his brother Victor, later to become the great surgeon, Sir Victor Horsley, who laid down his life for his country. Val Prinsep, R.A., was one of the Captains, and affectionately known amongst us as "Jumbo," because of his Falstaffian dimensions.

CHAPTER V

FIRST FALTERING STEPS ON THE STAGE

W. G. Wills—Mrs. Rousby—Charles Reade—Miss Ellen Terry—Samuel Phelps—Arthur Cecil—George Meredith.

AFTER THREE HAPPY YEARS at the Academy Schools, the force of circumstances led me to the stage. Though I had a great love of the theatre, it was no wish of mine to become an actor, but I was the eldest of a large family, and it was time for me to get out of the nest and make my own living. W. G. Wills, the dramatist, who had seen me act as a boy, came one day to the house with a proposal that I should take a part about to become vacant in his play then running at the old Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street, called *Mary Queen o' Scots*, in which the beautiful Mrs. Rousby and her husband were acting.

The next day, in a sort of dream, I found myself reciting to Mrs. Rousby. I was approved of, the part was given to me, and in three or four days I was plunged into the awful ordeal of a first appearance. The part I had to play was that of the "juvenile lead," Chastelard, the lover of Mary Stuart.

There were various stirring scenes, but it was

purely a theatrical play, and hardly convincing. John Knox was in evidence, and had violent interviews with Mary, the first one being at her entrance into Edinburgh, in a bright blue velvet riding-habit on a white horse of comfortable girth. Knox disputed her passage, and very properly the juvenile lead put an end to altercations by crying in a loud and declamatory voice, "Stand aside and let the Queen of Scotland pass," and poor Knox was made to retire in confusion! Chastelard, however, had some very graceful lines to speak. I did my best, and that best I am persuaded was very bad, but my fellow-students did not think so, bless them! They were in the pit in battalions, and everything I said and did was received with tumultuous applause, and the play, I was told, never went so well! But my "clacque," however, did not save the fortunes of *Mary Queen o' Scots*, which was soon withdrawn.

My next engagement brought me in contact with two wonderful people, Charles Reade, the author, and Miss Ellen Terry. The play was *The Wandering Heir*, which Reade himself was about to take on a tour. It started at Astley's, over the water, opposite the Houses of Parliament. There was a strong smell of horses about the place, for the once celebrated circus had been turned into a rough sort of playhouse. The day before the first night Charles Reade was told he could not open, as the gas and the water were cut off owing to the previous tenant having vanished without paying the rates, so the great novelist had to disburse, with imprecations, in a

rich vocabulary, on the head of the delinquent. Reade was a tall and heavily built man, with a striking and odd appearance, for his clothes hung on him in folds almost, and the trousers were cut very wide. He invariably wore side-spring cloth boots with patent leather tips, such as old ladies used to wear, and affected a very low-crowned silk hat with a broad brim. He was hot-tempered, with a curious naïve cunning, and was capable of putting on a martyr look which was irresistible when any exhibition of temper failed in its effect, reminding one of a spoilt child. To those he liked he was warm-hearted, kind, and sympathetic in the extreme. He once gave me a commission to paint a picture of an incident in one of his books, I think *The Rival Queens*, and bought me some yards of satins and velvets of the colours he wanted my models to wear. I worked very hard at the picture, but alas, it turned out to be an abominable production !

At one time some person or persons tried to do him out of his house in Park Place, Knightsbridge, but it appears they did not succeed, for one morning the passers-by were amazed to find on the low wall supporting the railing in front of his house the words " Naboth's Vineyard " painted in huge white letters ! I recall his appearance at his desk when he was preparing an English version for the stage of Zola's *L'Assommoir*, in which Charles Warner gave such a powerful performance. It was on an occasion when I had invaded the lion's den to ask him to cast me in the play, but I could not get into the room

farther than the open door, as the whole of the floor was covered with sheets of his manuscript, which he had allowed to float from his desk in all directions. I had to shut the door quickly lest the draught should ruffle this sea of papers over which we held an animated talk, but which did not result in my being cast in *Drink*.

At rehearsal he was always ready to show the lover how to make love, or the villain how to "take the corner" in the most effective style. I once saw him teach an actor how to dance the hornpipe! On another occasion he showed the hero how to grapple the villain in the scene of a sinking ship, and actually rolled with him off the ship, over the dusty canvas billows into the trap. The hero was somewhat ruffled, but the old man came up smiling and delighted. The sea in those days was represented by a large piece of canvas painted blue, laid upon the whole of the stage and shaken by stage hands from the wings. The illusion was hardly convincing, as the drowning men lay quite exposed on the top of the water till they reached, with much struggling, a slit cut in the canvas just above the trap, when they suddenly disappeared. This device, however, always evoked rounds of applause from a thrilled audience.

The play was called *The Scuttled Ship*. My part in this amazing piece was that of the owner, a naughty fellow who bribed the first mate to make holes in the ship's side in order that he might get compensation from Lloyds. Of course, the woman I

loved, played by Miss Terry, was on board, and believed to be drowned. In the next act, in a street in London, I very properly turned up in a full suit of mourning, and the first person I met was the mate, admirably played by Robert Pateman, whom I hoped had gone down with the ship. "You here?" "Yes, I, your wretched dupe, etc." This solemn scene between two men torn with remorse was on one occasion not completed, for during the progress of the scene we both became speechless from uncontrollable laughter and were forced to face about and walk off the stage. Our breakdown was due to my having struck a distant church spire painted on the front cloth, when threatening the mate with my walking-stick.

Prior to this engagement, Charles Reade told me it would be well if I paid my respects to Miss Terry, so I called at her house in Taviton Street, Gordon Square, and was shown into the drawing-room. The floor was covered with straw-coloured matting, and there was a dado of the same material. Above the dado were white walls, and the hangings were of cretonne, with a fine Japanese pattern in delicate grey-blue. The chairs were of wicker with cushions like the hangings, and in the centre of the room was a full-sized cast of the Venus of Milo, before which was a small pedestal, holding a little censer from which rose, curling round the Venus, ribbons of blue smoke. The whole effect was what art students of my time would have called "awfully jolly."

Presently the door opened, and in floated a vision of loveliness! In a blue kimono and with that wonderful golden hair, she seemed to melt into the surroundings and appeared almost intangible. This was my first sight of Miss Terry. I was undergoing a sort of inspection, but her manner was so gracious that it soon cleared away my embarrassment. I was afterwards shown Master Gordon Craig in his cradle, and Miss Craig, a lively little girl, black-haired, with great inquiring eyes.

Miss Terry as Phillipa Chester in *The Wandering Heir* was the very spirit of high comedy, and I wish her later admirers could have seen her in the part. Very few could have done so, as I do not think the play was a financial success, in spite of her bewitching performance.

A few weeks after the tour I had the good fortune to be engaged by Charles Calvert, of the Prince's Theatre, Manchester, to join his stock company. Calvert had been reviving some of Shakespeare's plays with great intelligence and taste. Indeed Manchester in those days, both as regards music and the drama, was considerably in advance of London. Charles Hallé was conducting his full string band, playing music, not jigsaws, and Calvert's revivals were celebrated all over the country. His orchestra was conducted by Alfred Cellier, a genius in his way, who had to be locked up in a room when compositions were wanted of him. Later he composed the music for *Dorothy*, which had a great vogue. All to do with the stage was designed by the best artists

of the time, and it is doubtful if ever before Shakespeare had been put upon the stage so correctly, from an archæological point of view. Macready, Charles Kean, and Phelps had paved the way in a measure, but between their time and Calvert's the arts had greatly developed in every direction, and many books on costume became available, notably those of Planché, Racinet, and Viollet-le-Duc.

The time came when Calvert's company was called upon to support Samuel Phelps in beautiful revivals of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Second Part of Henry IV*. In the latter I was cast for Prince Hal. Phelps doubled the parts of Henry IV and Justice Shallow. His change from the imposing king to the little old, wizened Justice was most striking. During the first rehearsal of the impressive scene between the King and the Prince, Phelps suddenly grunted out, "Young man, you know nothing about this part; come to my dressing-room to-night at seven o'clock." I knocked at his door in fear and trembling that night. He was already dressed for Bottom, although there was yet half an hour before he could be wanted on the stage. This was his custom. He went through my part with me, and my eyes were opened to many things, the main one being that though I had worked much at the part, I knew precious little about it. All his austere and indeed almost brutal manner at rehearsal had vanished, and I found a gentle, kind, and considerate tutor. He bade me to his lodging the next day for further study, and this

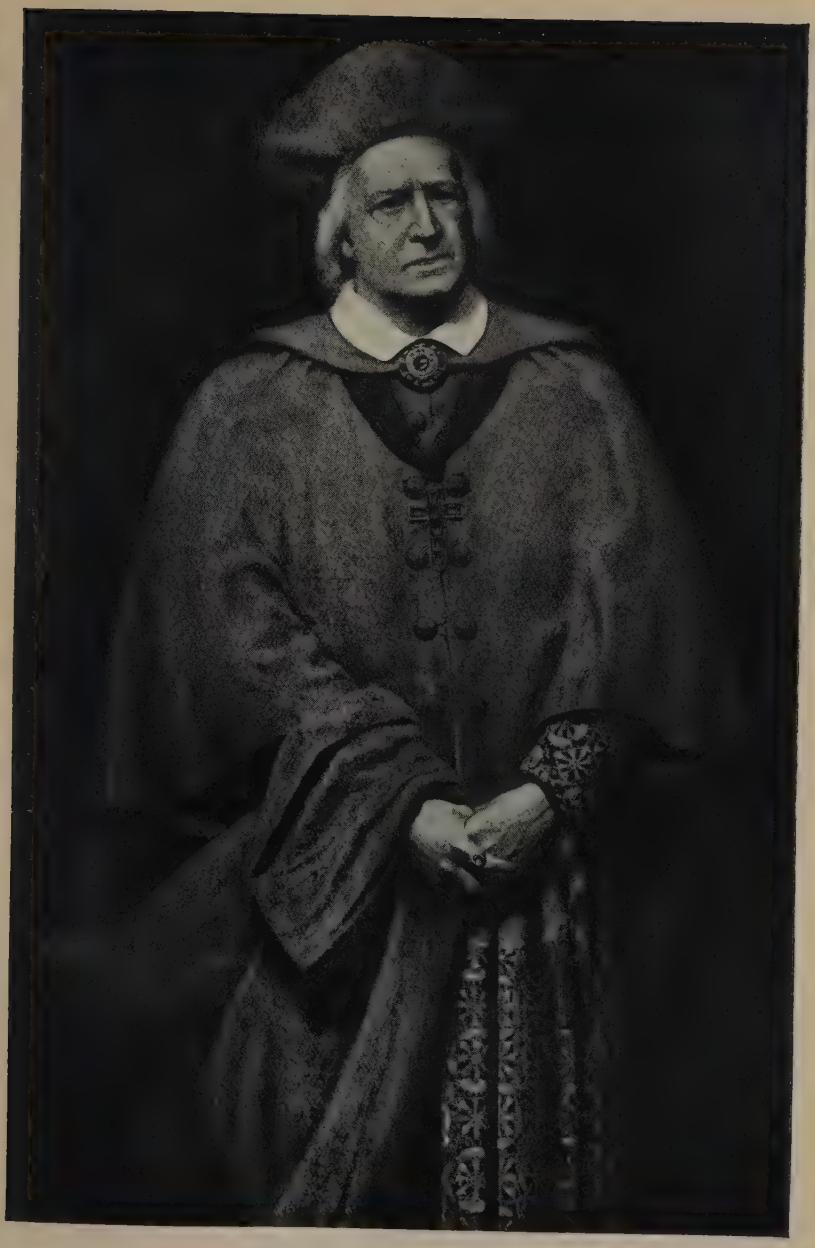
was the beginning of an interest he took in all my doings almost to the day of his death, and from that time on he seldom played an engagement without me. To be taken up so early in my career by one of the best of the old school was my supreme good fortune. He had been Macready's favourite actor. Macready had played with Mrs. Siddons, and she had played with Garrick, so that I may boast of a good histrionic pedigree, and I confess to pride at being a link with the great past in my calling. Phelps always spoke of Macready as a big-hearted and lovable man, but he described his leading woman, Miss Helen Faucit, as a rather tiresome lady! Years after, I came under her patronizing observation.

Phelps was a most versatile actor. He could ring the changes from tragedy to character parts, and from high comedy to low. I supported him in his Sir Peter Teazle, John Thornbury, Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, the Man of Quality, Bottom, Wolsey, Falstaff, Shylock, Henry IV, Richelieu, Anthony Absolute, and Malvolio, all masterly performances. Many of the prominent actors of London in the seventies had never seen him play, and were inclined to speak of him as old-fashioned and out of date. This I would not allow, and I persuaded a group of them, some five or six, to go and see his Wolsey, and great was my delight when, spying through a hole in the curtain after the farewell scene, I found my friends in the front row of the stalls at a morning performance, evidently deeply moved, as they afterwards admitted; nor could they say enough in his

praise. There is the good old school, and the bad old school, and the former is the best school for any time.

Samuel Phelps's dignity of mind, his high ideals, his pride in his calling, his contempt for wire-pullers, left a lasting impression which remained with me through all my stage career. The attainments of that career, such as they have been, are due to his influence and teaching. He died in harness, as did Irving, and strangely enough both died after playing priests ; Wolsey was Phelps's last part. He faltered in his farewell speech to Cromwell, tried to recover, and muttered lines from *Hamlet* and other plays which he had not performed for years, and finally fell into the arms of my brother, Norman Forbes, the Cromwell at the time, who bore him from the stage. Irving's last words were from Tennyson's beautiful creation of *Becket*, " Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

A few months before Phelps died I painted his portrait as Wolsey. One day, when the picture was nearly finished, John Hollingshead burst into my studio, saying very rapidly : " How are you, Robertson ? You've a portrait of Phelps, haven't you ? " " Yes, here it is." " Well, the members of the Garrick want to buy it ! " and the kind-hearted man beamed and enjoyed my amazement. The poor actor and the good fairy in the shape of Hollingshead, with a chorus of more good fairies in the shape of members of the Garrick Club with their golden sovereigns ready to throw into his lap ! Bancroft



SAMUEL PHELPS AS WOLSEY.

Painted by J. F.-R.

Reproduced by kind permission of the Garrick Club.

To face p. 70.

acted as the good fairy treasurer. The portrait having been inspected by Millais and approved, was soon hanging in the Club.

The Garrick was founded in 1833, and had as its members practically all the literary and artistic lights of the mid-Victorian period. Of the painters there were John Millais, Elmore, O'Neil, John Gilbert, Frith, Leighton, Prinsep, Creswick, David Roberts, and John Philip. Literature was represented by Anthony Trollope, Shirley Brooks, Wilkie Collins, Charles Reade, Tom Taylor, Charles Lever, Thackeray, and Charles Dickens. Among the actors were James Anderson, Charles Mathews, Phelps, and Macready, who was one of the original members, as was Count D'Orsay.

My friend, the late Cecil Clay, who remembered many of them, related a story of Charles Lever, showing his quick wit. While playing a rubber of whist one day, of which Lever was very fond, he found himself the partner of a certain baronet with whom he was not acquainted, nor did he know his name and degree, but he heard Clay and the others address him familiarly as "Rex," which was the baronet's christian name, and naturally enough Lever addressed him as Mr. Rex. Now the baronet at one part of the game held very bad cards, the rubber was lost, and poor Lever lost sixteen shillings, a sum he could ill afford. As the cards were being dealt out for the next game, the name and title of his partner were made known to him, upon which he addressed him thus: "Sir, I must ask your

pardon for failing to address you properly just now, I might have known you were a baronet by your bloody hand!" A bloody hand is the badge of a baronet.

In December 1874 John Hollingshead produced at the Gaiety *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with a goodly company, of which I was a humble member. Phelps was the Falstaff, Herman Vezin Ford, Miss Rose Leclerc and Mrs. John Wood the two ladies of Windsor, Arthur Cecil Dr. Caius, and Edward Righton and J. S. Taylor, Maclean and Belford were of the company, and all were admirable.

For this revival Sullivan wrote some beautiful music, Swinburne the following verses, which were sung with a cockney accent, alas! by the pretty young lady who played Sweet Anne Page.

Love laid his sleepless head
On a thorny rosy bed,
And his eyes with grief were red,
And cold his lips as the dead,
And grief and sorrow and scorne
Kept watch by his bed forlorne,
Till the night was overworn,
And the day was merry with dawn.

And joy rose up with the day,
And kissed love's lips as he lay,
And the watchers ghostly and grey,
Fled from his pillow away.
And his eyes at the dawn grew bright,
And his face was ruddy with light,
Sorrow may reign for a night,
But day will bring back delight.

During the run there was a fine, I remember, instituted amongst us for those who slipped in the text, and on the last Saturday of the season a bowl of punch was bought with the proceeds, a glass of which was sent to Mrs. John Wood's dressing-room. The green-room was much frequented by the actors in those days, and a certain state was observed. One of the actors approached the comedienne with a bow and asked if she had received the glass of punch, on which she answered : "Yes, thank you, and it has got into my head, thank God !"

None is left of that brilliant company. What kind, genial creatures they all were ! Not mentioning Phelps, my particular friend was Arthur Cecil, the best of men. He was then a beginner on the regular stage, recruited from German Reed's company of entertainers and had been successor to John Parry.

Cecil always carried a little black bag, it never left him. At the club, at dinners, suppers, luncheons, rehearsals, concerts, always the little black bag, and I believe no one ever discovered what he carried in it. To him I owe the friendship of George Meredith. They were great walkers and loved the mountains of Switzerland, and did some climbing in a modest way. Cecil told me that on a certain early morn they were to climb and meet the sunrise. It turned out that Meredith for some reason could not go, and Cecil the next morning burst into his room full of the wonders of the view, the fine morning air, and the climb, which had, however, somewhat damaged his garments. Cecil, having finished the

account of his adventures, Meredith turned from his desk, looked his friend's somewhat bedraggled figure up and down, and immediately delivered himself of the following :

> The sun it shone upon the crinkled crag,
> He clomb it, it left him scarce a rag.
> With knees barked blue, and bleeding nether bare
> He boasted he'd enjoyed the mountain air.

Many years later Cecil and I walked over from Dorking one day to take luncheon with Meredith in his cottage at Box Hill, and received a royal welcome. Before we sat down he went to the wine cellar and returned with a bottle of some favourite wine, which he handled with great care, and standing at the table, he delivered himself of an amazing oration on the merits of the wine, just to the two of us. Its colour, its aroma, its taste, and beauty of the vine-clad hill-side from whence it came, the honesty of his wine merchant—all were dwelt upon with romance and humour and great flow of imagery, and then he sat down with a thundering Olympian laugh. Cecil and I were good listeners, and were rewarded. He, too, was a good listener, and when in the mood would draw out of his guests the best they could give. Some have accused him of being dictatorial and wishing to have the lion's share of the talk in general company. Those who charged him with this weakness, or rather strength, were only too glad, I had noticed, to listen attentively. And well they might, for his talk was inspiring.

At any rate, in the company of three or four congenial spirits he wore no frills, but was simplicity itself, and indeed rarely could he be got to talk about his own personal matters. Meredith was of medium height, his face clean-cut as a cameo, very French in its character. His hands were delicate and expressive in action, and he had a powerful voice, of which I think he was rather proud.

CHAPTER VI

SOME STAGE MISHAPS, AND A RETURN TO MY FIRST LOVE

Mr. and Mrs. Kendal—Bret Harte—Henry Neville—Robert Buchanan—Charles Warner—Salvini—Millais—Holman Hunt—George du Maurier—Gerald du Maurier.

JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD IN 1874 inaugurated a season of legitimate drama which lasted three months, during which time I supported Phelps, Herman Vezin, and Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, and played twelve parts. I have the keenest recollection of the kindness and encouragement shown me by the Kendals at this the first, and unfortunately for me, the only time I met them on the stage. I remember, soon after the engagement, calling on them, and being at the time under a cloud of depression about my future, but I know I left their doorstep full of good spirits and high hope.

The incomparable actress, then still known as Madge Robertson, called me kinsman, and has done so to this day. I cannot claim any direct relationship, however, to this supremely gifted woman, whose acting has so often inspired me. Neither in this country nor in any other was there

her equal in the parts she played. Except one, and she was the great Frenchwoman, Aimée Desclée. It was a sad loss to the stage that Mrs. Kendal never appeared in some of the great tragic rôles. She would have made a perfect Constance and a supreme Lady Macbeth.

In 1876 I became a member of the company at the Haymarket Theatre, then under the management of Buckstone. A play by Tom Taylor on *Anne Boleyn* was given, in which the beautiful Adelaide Neilson appeared. This was followed by *Daniel Druce*, a pretty play by W. S. Gilbert. Vezin, Howe, Odel, and Miss Marion Terry were in the cast. Miss Kate Terry coached Miss Marion and myself in a love scene, and very admirably she did it. The play had a considerable vogue, and the part of Geoffrey Wynyard gave me "a leg up" in my calling.

It was while playing this part in Glasgow that I first met Bret Harte. A quiet, reserved little man he was, full of a genial and kindly spirit. The then Government of his country could find no better post for this genius than a consulship! Many were his quips and humorous sayings. Two will bear repeating, though perhaps familiar to some. "What is a belted earl? Is he an earl who doesn't wear braces?" Upon one talking much about his ancestors, Bret Harte said, "You remind me of a potato, the best part of you is underground."

From the Haymarket I went to the old Olympic Theatre, then under Henry Neville, and remained

with him for three seasons, playing a variety of parts. Neville was a far better actor than he ever got credit for. He was the dashing cavalier to great effect, but could strike a deeper note, as he did in Tom Taylor's *Clancarty*, *The Ticket of Leave Man*, and *Henry Dunbar* by Miss Braddon.

In August 1878 I was engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft to play Orloff in *Diplomacy* in place of Bancroft during the original run, as he was about to take a holiday. The handsome Harry Conway replaced Kendal, and Miss Amy Roselle Mrs. Kendal, for the same reason, Arthur Cecil and John Clayton remaining in their parts—Baron Stein and Henry Beauclerc—and thus it so fell out that I was associated with every production of *Diplomacy* in London, until it was once more put on the stage by Gerald du Maurier.

The whole atmosphere of the old Prince of Wales's was in striking contrast to the other theatres. This was noticeable the moment one entered the stage door. I shall set down my tribute to this admirable management later on.

In the seventies it was usual for those who wished to produce plays or to exploit themselves in important rôles, to take some leading theatre from the regular manager during August, and to keep it open by hook or by crook till the return of the lessee and his company in September. It being important for me to be in continual work, I was always ready and glad to join the incoming management at the end of the regular season. This I was lucky enough

to be able to do for four years without a break or holiday of any kind.

A play by Robert Buchanan, the poet, was produced under these conditions, called *Corinne*, in which I played a naughty Abbé. Laid in the time of the French Revolution, it was crowded with sensational scenes, but it was not a success. Poor Charles Warner was in the cast. He had the most exuberant spirits of any man I ever knew. He was then beginning to show his metal as an actor, and eventually reached the position of being one of the most powerful and versatile players on the stage. His enthusiasm for fine acting in his brother actors was unbounded, and when pleased, he was ungrudging in his praise. On a remarkable occasion, when Salvini gave a special morning performance at Drury Lane for the actors, Warner could not contain himself after the scene between Iago and Othello, but jumped up on to his seat and shouted and danced with excitement. But indeed the whole house was electrified, and Salvini played as I had never seen him do before or since.

In August 1879 there was produced at the Lyceum a serious drama called *Zilla*, or *The Scar on the Wrist*, which I venture to say provoked more laughter than any comedy or farce ever written. How intricate and disjointed the plot was, may be gathered from the fact that one of the actors, J. H. Barnes, then known as "Handsome Jack," asked me at the third or fourth rehearsal what the play was about. I told him I did not know; this information appeared to

give him much relief! The whole company was terribly in earnest, but, on the first night, whatever we said or did was received by pit, gallery, boxes, and stalls with shouts of laughter. One of the characters played by Frank Tyars was supposed to be slain in the middle of the second act, and there the body lay a long time while other matters were toward. At last the dead man had the scene to himself, upon which, to the amazement of the audience, he rose and uttered a fatal line. "Ha! a light strikes in upon me, I see it all!" "Do you, b' God?" said a voice from the gallery!

Tom Meade, an admirable and dignified actor under normal conditions, was not very familiar with his lines on this occasion, and unfortunately at his first entrance he had to deliver a long soliloquy. He paced the empty stage—a street scene, "full set," as I remember, but no ringing tones, so familiar to the Lyceum audiences, were forthcoming. At last he took a three-legged stool from the inn door, carried it down close to the floats, sat on it, shook his forefinger at the audience, and said, "Here I am!" A hush fell upon the audience, a hush of expectancy, then after a pause again came with tragic intensity and increased tremolo, "Here I am," upon which a wag in the gallery cried, "All right, Tom, we see that; get on." This familiarity was too much for Meade, who rose from the stool, tucked it under his arm, and with great dignity strode from the stage.

In one scene he had to preside as a judge, and the

hero of the play, a titled personage, was brought before him upon some wrongful charge. Tom was not very clear about the hero's title, and moreover he had a habit of expressing his thoughts out loud when any mishap arose, in the same tones as the words of his part. Addressing the prisoner, he said : " Commendatore Paul, I mean Signor, no, Monsieur de Paul, you are here before me on a charge of—of—(moustache coming off, by God)—Count Paul, you stand before me on a charge of high treason. Do you realize the terrible position in which you stand ? *No ?* " Then, not remembering any more of his part, he said : " Jailer, remove your prisoner." The prisoner had a long speech to make in his own defence, a speech he had been waiting for all the evening, and he muttered protestations and struggled with the jailer. " Why am I not obeyed ? " says Tom. " Thou naughty varlet, remove the prisoner Paul." My brother Ian, who was the jailer, saw nothing for it but to lift the protesting Paul bodily off his feet and bear him from the court ! There was a pause in the proceedings, broken by a voice from the gallery, " Oh, Paul, Paul, wherefore persecutest thou me ? "

During the progress of the play I had to rescue the heroine from the villain's castle, and to do so it was necessary to climb to a high window and carry her through. Now the heroine was playing a dual rôle, a princess and a gipsy, which entailed many rapid changes of costume, and when I dropped with her on the other side of the scene, I found myself

in utter darkness caused by some flats having been adjusted immediately under the window at the back, that the lady might change at once from the princess to the gipsy. Protesting voices of mistress and maid came out from the gloom, saying, "Go away, you can't stay here, go away." But there was no going away, as the screens had been firmly tied together and to the back of the scene, the stage hands having left no way for me to escape. I became vaguely conscious that the virgin princess was being stripped and was much embarrassed, by the indignant voices, now growing more insistent, "You cannot remain here; how dare you, etc." At last one of the stage hands realized my highly improper situation, and made an opening for me to slip through.

The gipsy, I need hardly say, had to die before the end of the play, but in order to be able to change to the princess to finish the piece, she, surrounded by her weeping friends, sweetly passed away on a couch, the back of which was so arranged that she might be tipped out, and a very obvious waxen figure take her place. Unfortunately the carpenters had failed to join the end of her couch with one of the wings, the result being that the poor lady was seen escaping on her hands and knees from the back of the couch to the wings, to the great delight of the audience.

In the last act some important title-deeds had been hidden in a well bucket hanging very conspicuously in the centre of the market-place. I, as the good genius of the play, was hunting for these title-deeds,

and looking for them in even more unlikely places than the bucket, when a voice from the front, shouted, "For Heaven's sake, Robertson, look in the bucket and finish the piece!"

Before Irving returned to the Lyceum, Miss Genevieve Ward produced *Forget-me-Not*, by Merivale and Groves. I supported her as Sir Horace Welby. The piece was a powerful one, and proved a great success. Miss Ward won golden opinions from crowded audiences, and eventually took the play to America and Australia.

After I had been on the stage about five years, I found time, due to long runs, to go back to my first love, painting. I got several commissions for portraits, mainly through the kindness of Millais, who gave me great encouragement. I, of course, came under the spell of this magnetic man, this child of nature, and his wonderful art. I have watched him under many conditions—while painting, while instructing students, while casting on the Tay for salmon, with his gun on the hill for grouse, on the marshes for duck, and in the woods for pheasant or capercailzie.

Whatever he put his hand to, was done with his whole mind concentrated on the subject. His energy and vitality, united to a boyish enthusiasm, were amazing. He could always tire out far younger men than himself. While painting he was on springs all the time. He literally rushed at the canvas, made some correction, then back again several yards from the easel. He seemed longer from the picture than

at it, but the work was not slow in growing. He would mutter and blurt out some command to his sitter, generally on the importance of keeping quite still, about which he was adamant. Once he was correcting a portrait which I had begun and taken to his studio, and the sitter, a young lady, was present. "Ha-ha," said he, soon after she was seated on the throne, "Forbes, you don't keep your sitters still enough; you must treat them as if they were being photographed. Do you hear that, young lady? Now then, quite still," and then the dashing up and down the studio began.

One day I was looking at his picture of the soldier-boy under a tree playing on a fife to some little girls, which he had just finished. He was standing behind me, waiting like an impatient boy for my verdict, when suddenly he seized my arm, dragged me up to the picture, and pointing to the pursed lips of the boy said, "Look, they say I don't take pains. Look at that mouth; I took it out three times, but I've got it, haven't I?"

In the picture of the young Princes in the Tower there is a single straw breaking the line of the step in the foreground. Some half-dozen people, myself of the number, were admiring it silently, and amongst us a lady, who with uplifted glasses was gushingly complimentary. The unfortunate woman over-did it, for she said, "Dear Mr. Millais, do tell me, is that straw painted, or is it a real one sticking to the canvas?" The ridiculous question nettled Millais, and he took her close up to the picture saying, "My

dear madam, you must see it is painted." But Millais told me of a real and graceful compliment paid him by an American who bred horses. When Millais had finished the American's portrait, he was allowed to see it for the first time. There was a long silence while he gazed at the picture, so long, indeed, that the painter got anxious. At last the man said, " I breed horses, and it is my habit every morning after breakfast to stand at a certain window in my house, and the fillies come galloping up at the sight of me and feed from my hand. When I get that picture home, I shall stand it at that window, and I am very sure the fillies will come galloping up."

During one of my visits to the Millais in Scotland, one evening after dinner some thought-reading, much in vogue in those days, was introduced. We did the usual thing, finding objects blindfolded. Millais, never having seen these experiments, was amazed at the often successful results, and in a great state of excitement insisted that he should be " willed." Having been blindfolded, and holding a hand of one of the company, he soon found the object we had decided upon, the poker, and his boyish delight at his success was unbounded.

Millais and Holman Hunt were the pioneers of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, and nobly they stuck to their guns, in spite of adverse and indeed the most offensive treatment from the Press, and of hideous caricatures of their pictures and themselves which appeared in various periodicals. All this opposi-

tion left the young enthusiasts undaunted, and they ended in causing a great reformation in the art of painting. The renaissance in art generally which took place in mid-Victorian times was due to them. Not any clique or band or society of "ists," of which there have been scores since, have had any sort of influence comparable for a moment to that of the Pre-Raphaelite Brethren.

Holman Hunt was consistent to the principles of the P.R.B. to the end of his life, and some of his later pictures are his finest, full of a fertile imagination and a devoted purpose to a loving care in execution, which latter characteristic I would commend to the consideration of the slap-dash school! Seldom did he depart from religious subjects, the most notable exceptions being his "Isabella and the Pot of Basil," and his last masterpiece, "The Lady of Shalott," which he finished in spite of failing eyesight.

For years Hunt lived in the Holy Land, that he might steep himself in the character of the country, the landscape and the people, and their ways and customs, and absorbingly interesting it was to hear him tell of his various experiences, in some of which his life was threatened. Modestly they were told, but one was left with the feeling that though a man of peace, he had undaunted courage, and could give a good account of himself when in a tight corner. Towards the end of his life he became quite blind, but he bore his affliction with beautiful fortitude, nor did he allow it in any way to dim his delight in the society of his friends, or his enthusiasm and

interest in life. His ashes lie under the dome of St. Paul's, and at his funeral I had the honour of being one of his pall-bearers at Mrs. Holman Hunt's request.

In February 1879 the brothers Gatti acquired the Adelphi Theatre, and opened their first season with a company of which Herman Vezin, Henry Neville, Charles Warner, Flockton, and the beautiful Adelaide Neilson were the conspicuous members. I played a gentleman "with song," and made love to Miss Neilson seated on a mossy bank. Its verdure, I remember, on the first night came off on her white satin dress! It was the kind of play in which a lady with any self-respect had to wear white satin in a forest glade. I have a tender memory for that shambling melodrama, for it was the means of my coming to know the du Maurier family. Clement Scott, who had translated the play from the French, gave me a letter to du Maurier asking him to hear me go through a chanson I was to sing in the play.

An appointment was made, and one eventful morning I found myself in their house at Hampstead in the midst of the family, not the least important member of which was a big St. Bernard. There by his side was the little boy who was to become the first comedian of his time. There was the slender, handsome youth who was to be known as the author of a play showing the deadly danger from invasion in which we stood, and who laid down his life fighting for his poor misguided country. There were the beautiful young daughters, in their very early teens,

whose sweet, tender faces often graced the pages of *Punch*. There was the gracious mother of this engaging flock, and the father, most lovable of men, teaching me, in a beautifully modulated tenor voice, the proper phrasing of an old French chanson. Vivid in my mind to this day is all this enchanting picture.

CHAPTER VII

"QUICK, THY TABLETS, MEMORY"

W. S. Gilbert—Frank Burnand—The Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's and Haymarket Theatres—Jean and Edward de Reske—Miersvinski—Madame Modjeska.

THERE WAS, IN THE LATE SEVENTIES, a small and youthful band of enthusiasts, composed for the most part of art students, who won for themselves a curious notoriety through eccentricity of dress, prompted by vanity, but mainly through lack of means, for the high-waisted serge dresses the young women affected were cheap, and the coloured flannel shirts worn by the young men kept down the washing bill! They were quite harmless, and hardly deserved the ridicule they drew on themselves. The movement, such as it was, received considerable advertisement from the Press of a sarcastic nature, and came to be dubbed the Æsthetic movement, though the trivial craze little deserved so honourable a title.

When Gilbert and Sullivan wrote *Patience*, and the piece was about to go to the States, D'Oyly Carte, the manager, knowing that the American public were not familiar with the craze on which the play was built, sent Oscar Wilde on a lecture tour in order to prepare the ground for Bunthorne and his

chorus of admiring ladies, and very successful this ingenious advertisement proved.

Incidentally, the split between Gilbert and Sullivan, so much lamented at the time, was due to a very trivial circumstance. D'Oyly Carte had ordered some new stair carpets for the Savoy Theatre. "Why new carpets?" says Gilbert. "Why not?" said Sullivan and Carte. All the fat was in the fire, a breach ensued, and these incomparable associates parted never to write in conjunction again, and all over a bill for carpets!

Gilbert, though the kindest and most generous of men, suffered from a very quick temper. I recall a difference we had during one of the early rehearsals of his play, *The Vagabond*, at the Olympic. He complained that I was not familiar with the text, and I in those days, also of a quick temper, which years have tamed, answered, I regret to say, in unseemly fashion, to the effect, as I remember, that he had better get someone else to do the part. The rehearsal was proceeded with, and I thought the squall had blown over. We came to a scene where I had to make love to Miss Marion Terry in a wood. I expressed a wish to the author that I might rise at a certain point from a log on which I was seated. He took me aback by saying, "Oh, you may stand on your head if you like." Now Gilbert that very afternoon was to appear as the Harlequin in a pantomime got up by a group of amateurs for some charity, and I could not resist the retort, "No, I leave that to you." In the audacity of my youth, I thought

this very fine. I heard afterwards that he was angry with himself for giving me the opening.

Though coming in contact with one another very often, we did not speak for many years. It would sometimes chance that I found myself seated at the same table at the club with others, when the conversation was general and he, making some witty remark, or telling some quaint yarn, would always glare at me sideways down the table, as who should say, "Don't you dare to laugh at my funny stories," which I need hardly say I could not help doing. After thirty years, suddenly out of the blue came from him one of the most beautiful letters surely ever one man wrote to another, proposing a reconciliation! I did not succeed in going one better with my answer, but I tried hard, and from that time forth we were fast friends.

Gilbert was an honoured member of "The Two Pins Club," which was composed of some half-dozen cronies who rode in the Park a-mornings. Sir Frank Burnand was the president, and gave the club its mysterious title which naturally perplexed the uninitiated. On one asking to be enlightened as to its meaning, Burnand replied, "Why, don't you see, we commemorate two celebrated horsemen, Dick Turpin and John Gilpin!" It was to one of the members whose horse was never allowed to break into a trot or a gallop Gilbert gave the warning that if he did not take care he would be had up by the police for furious loitering! Gilbert once had a neighbour in the country who was a jam maker,

and it seems that he wrote a letter to Gilbert complaining that his dogs were in the habit of trespassing on his grounds. Gilbert's reply was to this effect: "Dear Sir, I will take care that in future my dogs do not trespass on your preserves. Pardon the expression."

In the autumn of 1879 I again came under the banner of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft at the Prince of Wales's Theatre to play in *Duty* (a piece by Sardou, done into English by James Albery, the author of *The Two Roses*) and Sergeant Jones in *Ours*—the last production in that historic little playhouse. In their very successful years of management they had introduced many improvements in the conduct of a theatre both before and behind the curtain. One felt an entirely different atmosphere from other theatres in London the moment one entered, either as a member of the audience or one of the company. Every consideration was shown the actor, and all the roughnesses one so often met with were smoothed away. To give an instance. In the payment of actors on Saturday morning, it was the general custom to oblige the players to stand in a row outside the treasurer's room and await his or her turn to go in and receive the salary due. I remember, being of a rebellious spirit, going without my salary for three weeks on one occasion rather than submit to the indignity.

This degrading custom was done away with by the Bancrofts. The treasurer came to the actor's dressing-room on Friday nights, and placed his

honorarium on the dressing table, in the presence of the actor. This is only one instance of the thoughtfulness and consideration of their admirable management. The best actors of the time were engaged by them. Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Miss Ellen Terry, Charles Coghlan, John Clayton, John Hare, George Honey, Arthur Pinero, Miss Amy Roselle, Henry Kemble, Arthur Cecil, Madame Modjeska, Mrs. Stirling, Mrs. Herman Vezin, Alfred Bishop, H. B. Conway, Lionel Brough, Miss Marion Terry, and Mrs. John Wood were all, at various times, under their management.

It was during this engagement with the Bancrofts that they removed to their new home, the old Haymarket Theatre, which they had transformed into the most beautiful playhouse in London, nor has anything equal to it been built since. Some years ago the L.C.C. regulations obliged Messrs. Harrison and Maude to reconstruct the interior.

The old house was more like a concert hall than a theatre, in shape a long parallelogram, and when first I played there under Buckstone it had only two rows of meagre stalls, into which ladies did not go. The dress circle was the fashionable part of the house in those days. The old Haymarket pit being quite open to the whole of the auditorium, with no dress circle projecting over any part of it, as in all other theatres, it was the most popular pit in the town. When Bancroft reconstructed the house, he turned the whole of this pit into stalls, and did not raise the level of the old dress circle, so that the stalls and

dress circle were merged into one, as it were, and the effect was very beautiful. He set the pittites among the gods in the front part of the gallery. This change was much resented by the frequenters of the pit, and there was an unseemly demonstration on the opening night. When Kemble and I came on to begin the first scene in *Money*, a revival with which the theatre was opened on January 31, 1880, not a word would the pittites listen to. We tried several times, but the pandemonium continued. Finally, Bancroft, made up for Sir Frederick Blunt, came on to the stage and faced the disturbers, at which the shouting became more violent. "Where is our pit? Give us back our pit!" they cried. He tried to reason with them, but all in vain. At last he managed to get out, "Well, if you won't listen to me, will you listen to the play?" At which they shouted in chorus, "Yes," and Kemble and I, who had remained on the stage, started the scene once more, and the rest of the play was listened to with great attention. The worst fog I have ever known came down on London that night. Link boys suddenly appeared, but their flaming torches seemed only as dim spots of light even at close range. All the traffic was stopped, and it was said that many people did not get home till daylight. There was a case of a valuable horse being taken from the shafts to spend the night in the hall of a private house.

I remember the part of Sharp, in this revival of *Money*, was played by Charles Brookfield, and I think it was his first appearance on the regular stage. He

had been a prominent member of the Cambridge A.D.C. A witty and whimsical creature, with a bitter tongue, but the kindest heart in the world. He took me to see his mother, a very beautiful old lady, full of smiles and grace and with a lovely voice. She had been a great friend of Thackeray's.

A few months after came a revival of *School*, when the part of Krux, the usher, fell to my lot. The gifted Miss Kate Rorke started her career as one of the schoolgirls, and in after years when fame had come to her, she told me that though she never succeeded, she took the greatest trouble every night in trying to hit some vulnerable part of me with a book, in the mutiny of the schoolgirls against Krux, led by the enchanting Naomi Tigh of Marie Wilton. My recollection, however, is that both she and Miss Rorke succeeded in delivering their missiles on several occasions all too well.

Marie Bancroft ! It was my good fortune to delight in her consummate art when she was still in her prime. Naomi Tigh, Polly Eccles—the very names recall her face, and make one smile ! What a breadth of style was hers, and yet so dainty withal. Never the means whereby she arrived at her effects were apparent. Laughter and tears came and went in quick succession with a perfect spontaneity. She had a clear, ringing musical voice under perfect control, and every word, even in the most rapid passages, clean cut. In short, she was the perfect *diseuse*. She was ever intolerant of the confidential mumbler at rehearsal, and I have heard her illustrate

to some offender the necessity of good articulation by quoting an old actor who on an occasion drew a young man, whose words seemed to be in his boots, down to the floats, and said, "Laddie, you see that bright red brick in the middle of the wall at the back of the gallery?" "Yes." "Well, laddie, will you oblige me by getting the words off your chest and plastering them on to that particular brick? We hope to have some in the gallery this evening who will have paid their nimble tanners. Pray remember them as well as the seven-and-sixpenny party in the front row of the stalls!" Bewitching Marie Bancroft! Genius was surely hers!

For the last two or three years I had been in the position to take a holiday now and again, mostly spent with friends. One of these was a very great character, a bachelor, Ferdinand Arkwright, sometime Mayor of Warwick, in the main street of which he had a delightful house, always open to his friends. In the hall was a favourite parrot, who invariably received visitors on their entry with some remark of an unflattering nature. On one occasion Arkwright was to lend his house to a friend and his bride for their honeymoon, so he decided that the fearful bird should be removed to other quarters during their stay, as there was no depending on his language. Indeed, had the bride been subjected to the welcome I got on my first visit, she certainly would have had the shock of her life!

But though the bird was suffered to enjoy his Rabelaisian vocabulary to his heart's content, with

his master, however, a strict punctilio was the order of the day, and there was a definite line to be drawn in the character of after-dinner stories. In the evening Arkwright wore a high white neck cloth tied to a nicety, a small frill on his shirt front, a blue body coat with brass buttons, with a scarlet geranium in the lapel showing an inch of the stalk protruding from the lower button-hole to denote that the flower was not wired. He had a stutter, which lent an extra point to his many good sayings. One story is credited to him of his talking with a lady at a ball, and drawing her attention to a man who, though shaven, showed the growth of his beard, with the remark :

" Who is the bl-blue man over there ? "

Lady (bridling) : " My husband ! "

" Oh, I'm so glad, because you can tell me if he is bl-blue all over ! "

Arkwright had a sort of double in Travers of New York, who also added zest to his quips and japes by a stutter. His sayings were innumerable and widely circulated, but the following one is, I fancy, not generally known.

While on a journey by train to a friend to whom he was taking a puppy which lay at his feet in a closed basket, the animal proved restless in his confinement, and his movements exercised the curiosity of a man sitting opposite to Travers, who said, " May I ask, sir, what the animal is you have in that basket ? "

Travers, who was reading and did not wish to be disturbed by being drawn into conversation with a stranger, told him it was a mongoose.

The man : " A mongoose ! Now, may I ask, sir, what you are going to do with a mongoose ? "

Travers, with a glare of anger in his eyes and with some asperity, " I am going on a visit to a friend who sees sus-snakes, and this m-mongoose will eat them."

The man, taken aback and laughing nervously, but coming to the charge again after a few minutes in reassuring and soothing tones as dealing with one mad, said, " Of course you know those are not real snakes your friend sees ? "

Travers : " N-no, I know ; this is not a r-r-real mongoose ! "

Apropos of American yarns, Mrs. Ryley, the author of *Mice and Men*, on being asked if she knew a story typical of American humour, told us the following : A man going to a town with which he was not familiar, wished, on getting there, to post a letter which he had written on the train. The hour was late and the streets were empty, but he at last met a native, to whom he said, " Do you know where the post office is ? " The man answered " Yes " and walked on, no doubt very pleased with his facetiousness, but presently remorse came upon him, and he ran back several blocks, overtook the stranger, and said, " Did you really want to know where the post office is ? " The stranger answered " No ! " I once told this story to a man—he was not an American—who did not laugh, but remarked, " The silly ass, didn't he really want to know where the post office was, after all ? "

My old friend, John Drew, the highly gifted

comedian, once told my wife that he overheard the following in Montreal. A huge Scotsman, speaking in the presence of a lot of people at a restaurant bar, held forth against the Roman Catholics, who had had some processions in the town, and after a long and heated harangue, wound it up with, " I say to hell with the Pope ! " at which a little French-Canadian said quietly from the other end of the bar, " You say to 'ell with the Pope ? I say to 'ell with your 'Arry Louder ! "

It was in the summer of 1880 that I played with Modjeska for the first time under romantic and novel conditions. She and her husband, Count Bozenta Chlapowski, and I, with my sister, were staying at the remote fishing village of Cadgewith, in Cornwall. The rector of St. Ruan hard by urged us to give a performance in aid of his church, and it was decided, as there was no room or hall within miles big enough for such an audience as Modjeska would draw from the country-side, that the performance should be given in the rectory garden, and at night. With the aid of the coastguards a platform was made, near a running stream, with great trees as a background, and a big lawn gently rising from the brook became the auditorium. We gave some scenes from *Romeo and Juliet.* The lighting came from screened oil lamps and the lucky help of a full moon. No stage balcony scene was ever so beautiful. It was full of mystery and charm, and Modjeska seemed to be inspired by the beauty and novelty of the surroundings. The big audience sat enraptured.

This was the first time she played Juliet to an English audience. It seems there was "a chiel amang us taking notes," for a week or two afterwards an account of the whole matter appeared in the *World* newspaper, and Lady Archibald Campbell, struck with the idea, organized some performances of *As You Like It*, in the grounds of her house by Coombe Wood, out of which performance grew "The Pastoral Players" and like undertakings that became so popular later on under the leadership of Mr. Ben Greet and others.

The rector and his lady, Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, never ceased their kind attentions to our party, and to the rectory came many interesting people. There was also of our party young Walter Sickert, the painter.

One day we were all at a picnic in Mullion Cove, but the weather turning out very bad, we took refuge in the coastguard's house. After our meal we were entertained with stories by the coastguard of his various experiences on that stormy and dangerous coast. The lifeboat was housed hard by, and when asking him how the crew was summoned in so remote a place, he graphically explained that he and the neighbourhood were warned by gunfire, and messengers on swift ponies. Just as he was telling us that three guns was the signal for him and his men to get the lifeboat out, he was interrupted by the booming of a gun, then another and another. Sure enough it was the signal! Thrilled at this extraordinary coincidence, and much alarmed, we all rushed out and made for the lifeboat, which we

soon ran down to the water's edge. There was a considerable sea on, and a driving rain. We waited for the crew to man the boat, and in about ten minutes they came tumbling down the steep ravine leading to the cove, by twos and threes, but short of the boat's complement by four men. One of our party, Mr. Bradshaw, a retired naval commander, said we must launch the boat at once, and not wait for the missing men. Three of us, much to the satisfaction of the coastguard, volunteered. The boat was manned and off we went.

The launching was fairly easy, as the cove gave shelter from the heavy seas outside, but I remember that the rest of the party, including Modjeska and other ladies were knee deep in the sea to help get the boat off. Commander Bradshaw took the helm. The long sweeps were double banked, as two men at an oar is called. We pulled along the coast for about an hour to another cove, where we had been told was a vessel on the rocks. It turned out to be a false alarm. There was to be no rescue, much to the disappointment of Walter Sickert and myself. The going about to return to Mullion Cove was considered by the commander to be somewhat risky, so he shouted to us to put on the cork belts which we found tied under the thwarts. These we one after the other donned, and eventually reached our cove, the rest of our party receiving us with acclamation, and relief in the shape of hot tea. Walter Sickert was not so much concerned about doing his duty as an oar as in watching the wonderful effect

of the white foam dashing against the mighty serpentine rocks.

Madame Modjeska came to London with a considerable reputation from America. She had been the idol of her own country, Poland, but falling into ill-health, she and her husband, with some of their friends, migrated to America, mainly with the object of recruiting her health, and started an orange farm, into which Count Bozenta sunk much money. This venture failed, and the Count at his own cost sent his friends back to Poland. Something had to be done, as by the venture they were much reduced financially. Modjeska decided to return to the stage. With this object she studied English under John McCullough, a distinguished American actor, who had adopted the stage under somewhat peculiar circumstances.

After the assassination of Lincoln, the Government, suspecting that some actors had been implicated with Wilkes Booth in the murder plot, a suspicion for which there was no foundation, sent McCullough to San Francisco on a secret mission to investigate. To this end he made himself acquainted with all the actors in the city, and being much taken with their genial good fellowship, he became enamoured of the stage, and took to it as a calling. Thus was he induced to join the brotherhood amongst whose members he had been a Government spy. Gifted with a fine voice and an imposing appearance, he became a very popular actor in classic rôles. I first made his acquaintance while watching my brother

Norman take the first honours in fencing at the original Military Tournament held in the Agricultural Hall.

But to return to Madame Modjeska. She first appeared in London at the Court Theatre in an English version of *La Dame aux Camélias* at some morning performances. Her success was immediate. I was present at her first performance, and remember the enthusiasm of some actors who were there, notably Charles Warner and Mrs. Stirling. After the play, I waited on Mrs. Stirling to a cab, who with tears yet in her eyes said, " What an actress ! " The old war-horse had been deeply moved.

Modjeska, like Fechter, was handicapped by an accent, but in spite of this drawback she won for herself a large public, and remained in London some time, playing with great success in *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *Marie Stuart*, and *Frou-Frou*, in which plays I supported her. She also played under the Bancroft management in Sardou's *Odette*. She was urged to play Juliet, but considered herself too old for the part. One day the young and enthusiastic Frank Benson asked her if she would play the part with him and the members of the O.U.D.S. She could not, however, arrange to do so, but the proposal encouraged her to appear in Juliet later on. " For," said she, " if these young men do not think me too old, why should I not attempt the part ? " This she did under Wilson Barrett's management at the Court Theatre, and I was again her Romeo. She was indeed an inspiring Juliet, full of grace and charm and fire—

the best I have ever seen. She was very cultivated, steeped in the best literature, and could speak five languages, was "so delicate with her needle, an admirable musician, of high and plenteous wit and invention."

Her drawing-room on Sundays was always filled with interesting people, not only British, but American, French, and many from her own country. Edwin Booth, when in London, I remember, was often there, and the de Reskes, Jean and Edouard. In those days Jean de Reske was not singing, but giving his voice a long rest, that he might nurse it into a higher register for the tenor parts. This, however, did not prevent him singing now and then for a few of Modjeska's friends. Those of us who had the privilege of hearing him got an idea of the wonderful voice that was to enchant London and New York later on. There was the tenor Miersvinski, too, who at that time had a considerable vogue at Covent Garden, a wild creature, ready for any adventure and powerful as a bull. He could have had a fine career, but he elected to ruin himself with gambling and other indulgences.

The de Reskes were very cultivated men, hard workers, and great students. They would appear to have been independent of the stage, had considerable property in Poland, were keen on breeding horses and were fine riders. The gentle Hun, having devastated their country, they were ruined, and Edouard de Reske, once the idol of music lovers over the whole world, died in poverty.

When Modjeska retired from the stage, she and her husband went to live on the shores of California, where she passed away. Her body was taken back to her long-suffering and persecuted country. She was buried with great honour and ceremony in Cracow, and all Poland mourned her.

CHAPTER VIII

TOUCHING ON SOME FRIENDS

Justin M'Carthy—Whistler—Oscar Wilde—John Clayton—Lewis Wingfield—William Terriss—J. L. Toole—Arthur Pinero—Irving.

OUR HOME HAD BEEN for some time at 25, Charlotte Street, Bedford Square, that boasted, for the heart of London, quite a considerable garden with large trees, which together with those in the surrounding gardens, formed such a mass of bosky green, that from my mother's drawing-room window scarce any bricks and mortar could be seen. Lilies of the valley, jasmine, lilac, and many other flowers grew in this old garden. There was an orangery, dating back to Queen Anne, capacious, and fronted with columns between heavily sashed windows, a generous and deep pediment surmounting the whole. A big studio gave on to the garden, to which I was able by degrees to give that informal character dear to the painter.

Here, in the hours I could snatch from rehearsals, I painted many portraits, amongst them Phelps, Miss Ellen Terry, Constance Duchess of Westminster, Mrs. Kendal, Herman Vezin, Professor Masson, Dr. David Wilson, Brock the sculptor, Henry Irving and his son Harry, Tivadar Nachez the

violinist, Madame Modjeska, the beautiful Margaret Campbell, afterwards Mrs. Sieveking, Ferdinand Arkwright, and Justin Huntly M'Carthy, whose father's hospitable home was hard by in Gower Street, where so many interesting people forgathered in the early eighties.

Justin M'Carthy was big hearted and high minded, tolerant, and chivalrous ; always ready to encourage the young about him in their aspirations and their hopes, he suffused "sweetness and light," giving out with liberal hands sympathy and understanding. In these bounties it was my privilege to share.

Another delightful house of meeting in Gower Street was that of Mr. and Mrs. George Robinson, whose winsome daughter Mary became Madame Duclaux, the highly gifted writer, to whose house in Paris flock some of the best in the literary and scientific world. At the Robinsons' house I met *Punch's* inimitable Charles Keene, an eccentric-looking man, tall and long of neck, in a coat cut without a collar. He was an authority on bagpipes, of which I gathered he had a considerable collection ! Whistler counted him one of the greatest artists of his time.

In the early eighties I saw much of James McNeil Whistler. I first met him at George Boughton's studio, his great friend and compatriot. The stiff aigrette of grey hair, so familiar in later days, was then a soft wavy lock, lying very conspicuously, but flowing with the rest of his then black curly hair. He was hard up in those days, though the fact never seemed to dash his irresponsible and buoyant

spirits, nor did it prevent him giving hospitality to his friends.

At one of his celebrated breakfasts I remember there was at the time in the house in Tite Street a man in possession. Whistler had taught him to wait at table, which he did admirably, and during his protracted stay became devoted to the man whose goods and chattels he was set to watch over. Whistler told me that he had come to him one day, with tears in his eyes, saying, "Oh, sir, I hope you will keep me on as your servant; I long to quit my fearful calling!" Bills of a coming sale flanked the front door, and wind and rain had caused them to be partly detached from the wall. Whistler told the bailiff that he had no objection to the bills in themselves, but that they really must be kept tidy, and that he must paste the flying corners down, which the man at once did!

Breakfast on another occasion consisted only of fish, which Whistler apologized for by saying that his fishmonger was the only tradesman who would trust him, declaring to the company that he was one of the few gentlemen of his acquaintance. Making a chance call one day, I found Whistler varnishing with the greatest care, what, as I remember, was the "Rosa Corder" portrait. It lay flat on a large table, and I mounted a ladder to get a proper view of it. "By Jove!" said I. "How stunning!" Said he, "Yes, isn't it amazing! Isn't it amazing!"

He frequented the Beefsteak Club a great deal, and was the delight of the many brilliant members,

but of all the good things that were said, the jests, the sallies, no one ever got the whip-hand of him. He was always master and capped the best of their quips. On only one occasion do I remember him being " gravelled for lack of matter," and that was when a newspaper reporter stated in the press that " Whistler and Oscar Wilde were seen on the Brighton front, talking as usual about themselves." Whistler sent the paragraph to Wilde, with a brief note saying, " I wish these reporters would be accurate ; if you remember, Oscar, we were talking about me." Wilde sent him a telegram saying, " It is true, Jimmie, we were talking about you, but I was thinking of myself ! " But Whistler got his revenge, for some time after he was bade to Oscar Wilde's wedding, who, as the service was about to begin, received a telegram from him, saying, " Am detained, don't wait."

On a man of somewhat slippery and uncertain features asking Whistler to paint his portrait, he replied, " Yes, I will paint you, but I hope you will not be offended if I make the portrait like ! "

Wilde was pre-eminently a man of letters, a poet, and a dramatist, but hardly (as he, I think, tried to persuade himself he was) a good judge of colour and form in art. Whistler liked Wilde, and thoroughly appreciated his gifts as a writer, but he would never accept his views on art, and often handled him in the sarcastic vein, as instance his well-known quip, " He picks from our platters the plums for the puddings he peddles in the provinces," and his retort when Wilde asked him to superintend the decorations of

a house he had taken in Chelsea, "No, Oscar, you have been lecturing to us about the House Beautiful; now is your chance to show us one." I recall drawing Wilde's attention one day to a fine impression of the well-known Rembrandt etching of his cook, or "The Butcher," as it is sometimes called, of which I was very proud. He evidently did not recognize the master hand, for he turned from it with airy indifference, saying, "Scratchy, scratchy," upon which I could not resist retorting in his own tone, "Rembrandt, Rembrandt!"

I joined my friends, John Clayton and Arthur Cecil, at the Court Theatre in 1882, then under their management, to play in a pretty piece by Charles Godfrey, called *The Parvenu*. In the cast were Miss Marion Terry, Miss Lottie Venne, Miss Sophie Larkin, Henry Kemble, G. W. Anson, and Clayton, all actors of the first rank. One night during the progress of this play there was a very violent explosion on the stage, which brought down a great quantity of dust and put out most of the gas. In those days the limelight was produced by gases which were brought to the theatre in two huge rubber bags, and a very soft and beautiful light it was—far superior to the electric lights now in use. By some carelessness on the part of the limelight man, one or both of these bags burst with a loud report, throwing actors and audience into considerable confusion. The conductor, with great presence of mind, started the orchestra, and Barry Sullivan, who chanced to be in a box, rose, and in his powerful voice, with uplifted

hands, shouted "Keep your seats." Another member of the audience, no less a person than Edward Prince of Wales, stood up in the front of his box to reassure the people, who cheered him, and a panic was avoided. The Prince must then have immediately left his box, and unattended, as what follows will show. I was in my dressing-room at the moment of the explosion, and Anson, who was dressing with me, cried, "A bomb has been thrown at the Prince!" As I had experienced the same sort of accident in another theatre, I was sure of its nature, and hastened down to Clayton's dressing-room to advise him. Not finding him there nor on the stage, I sought him under the stage, which was in semi-darkness. There I found a solitary man in evening dress. It was the Prince! He was covered with dust and had lost his way, having come behind alone to find out what had caused the explosion, and was anxious to know if anyone had been hurt. I explained the nature of the explosion, and led him to Clayton's dressing-room, where he was brushed down, and after being told that no one had been injured he returned to his box to witness the rest of the play.

John Clayton was a very finished actor; his Joseph Surface was the finest I ever saw, full of subtlety and unction, and invested with all the fine airs one associates with the eighteenth century. He made it appear quite natural that Sir Peter should trust Joseph, so gracious and sincere was his behaviour to the older man. The performance was as complete and satisfying as was the Charles Surface of Coghlan or Phelps's

Sir Peter. Clayton had studied his art in Paris, and so brought a finish and distinction to his acting which placed him in the same category with Alfred Wiggan, Lee Murray, and John Hare.

Once when I was bemoaning to Clayton the trouble I had in wording with sufficient tact letters to authors whose plays I could not accept for production—" My dear fellow," said Clayton, " I solved the question only yesterday. I wrote to a man who had sent me an abominable play, and said, ' My dear Sir, I have read your play. Oh ! my very dear Sir ! Yours truly, John Clayton.'" I told this story on many occasions with great success. At last I told it to one who did not laugh. He was my secretary. It seemed to me hard, indeed, that one's own secretary should not laugh at one's funny stories. It appeared to me that he had mistaken his vocation, and I said in a tone of some irritation, " You don't seem to think that funny." Said he, " No, I don't. It was to me Mr. Clayton wrote that letter ! "

Clayton for a time kept house with Palgrave Simpson. I speak now of the mid-seventies, in Alfred Place, South Kensington. Many congenial and witty spirits would forgather there at late breakfasts on Sundays. There was the youthful Archie Wortley the painter, laying down the law on art, and Pellew, " full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard," so fat and heavy that he once stove in the bottom of a four-wheeler, and found himself suddenly running on the road, with confined strides, ere he could draw the attention of the many-caped jarvey to his pre-

carious position. W. S. Gilbert, then in his prime and writing *The Bab Ballads*, appearing weekly in *Fun*, often came, and of course kept the table in a roar. Herman Vezin, learned and dictatorial on the art of acting ; Dick Grain, Arthur Blount, Fred and Cecil Clay, all hosts in themselves, and happy handsome Jack Clayton himself, full of the joy of life, always posing as an idler, which he was far from being, gifted with the power of magnificent exaggerations, as when he described Charles Sugden, who was very " dossy " (a slang-word of those days derived from Count D'Orsay the exquisite), as being such a swell that he had diamond boot-trees and a turquoise opera-hat ! I was the youngest of that light-hearted crowd, now, alas ! in a like assembly, I find myself generally the oldest !

Often after one of these delightful luncheons some of us would walk across the Park, and so to Maida Vale, where we knew we should get a hearty welcome at another open house, and that was the Hon. Lewis Wingfield's. He had been in the service of the Red Cross during the Franco-Prussian War, and was in Paris all through the siege. Many strange experiences did he tell us, and one about Henri Regnault, the great French painter, which I think is not generally known.

Regnault, while helping to defend Paris against the Hun, was found to be missing on a retirement. A soldier described how he had called upon him to retire with the rest of his company, when Regnault said, " Here is my last cartridge ; I must fire it."

The ground, being recovered later by the French, the lines were searched for Regnault, but no trace of him could be found. Just then there was a brief truce to bury the dead, and Wingfield, with his Red Cross bearers, asked permission of the Germans to search their lines, which was granted, but again the search was in vain. Regnault, being much beloved of France, the loss of his body was kept a secret from the public, but it was decided there should be a funeral. This actually took place, and a devoted throng followed to pay their last tribute in ignorance of the facts. On a bracket high up on the walls of Wingfield's studio stood a skeleton in a French soldier's uniform. One day, I having remarked on the gruesome nature of the effigy, Wingfield said, "That effigy is even more gruesome than you think, due to an uncanny coincidence. The skeleton is that of a friend of mine who died for his country. You may perhaps think it morbid of me, but having secured the body of my poor friend, I arranged to have the skeleton 'set up,' and brought it home, and placed it upon that bracket. Among other mementos of the siege, I brought back a case of French uniforms. One day I thought it would be fitting to cover my friend's bones with the uniform of his country for which he had fought so well. Taking one of these haphazard from the case, I climbed a ladder and adjusted a pair of worn red trousers to the legs of the skeleton. I had just got the blue tunic adjusted, when chancing to glance inside the collar, I saw to my horrified amazement

the marks of his battalion, his company, and his number. It was my poor friend's own tunic ! "

In October 1882 I was engaged by Henry Irving to play Claudio in his beautiful revival of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Of the company were Henry Howe, Jack Robertson, James Fernandez, Tom Meade, Charles Glenney, Frank Tyars, William Terriss, Miss Milward, and Miss Ellen Terry. The revival had a phenomenal run, the house being crowded nightly for many months. Miss Terry's matchless performance of Beatrice will always linger in the memory of those who saw it, and she and Irving played into each other's hands in masterly fashion.

This was my first engagement at the Lyceum, and for me it is full of happy memories. During the run, Irving commissioned me to paint the church scene, where the marriage ceremony between Claudio and Hero is suddenly interrupted. Those concerned in the scene very kindly gave me sittings. Irving showed much interest in the progress of the picture, and on several occasions came to my studio, attended by his faithful Walter, to pose in his costume of Benedick. At the first sitting, after I had settled his position, he changed his pose several times, saying, " How will this do ? No ? Try this ? " Then another attitude was taken. At last I protested, but there were several drawings made before he was definitely fixed in his place on the canvas.

When the picture was finished he sent me, with a charming note, a cheque for twice the amount we had agreed upon. He had given me an idea of

the size he would like the canvas to be, but finding the figures would come too small to be effective, I chose a much bigger canvas, and this he gave as a reason for doubling the price! I returned the cheque, explaining my object in painting a larger picture than he had proposed. The picture would have been harder for me to do on a smaller canvas, and I could not take more than the sum we had fixed upon. Back came the cheque with another kind note. I returned it a second time, and again he sent it back! I was beaten, and with the proceeds I started my first banking account. This is only an isolated case of this remarkable man's princely generosity. The picture eventually passed into the hands of the late Mr. McFadden, of Philadelphia, and was presented by him to the Players' Club in New York, where it now hangs.

It would be impossible to write of the Lyceum days without mentioning William Terriss, the finest hero of romance then on the stage, nor has there been anyone quite to fill his place since. Ingenuous, kind-hearted, high-spirited, and brave as a lion, he was beloved by all who knew him, His real name was Lewin, one of a gifted and brilliant family. The conventions of costume never troubled him. He was invariably in a tweed suit, with a soft hat matching. He would never wear gloves nor carry a stick or umbrella. He neither drank nor smoked, went little to his clubs or to dinners and parties. My brother, Norman Forbes, tells how once Terriss, on discovering there was a secret meeting of Fenians

Reading from Left to Right—Miss Ellen Terry, James Fernandez, Tom Mead, Miss Milward, J. F.-R., William Terriss, Henry Irving, Charles Glenny, W. Haviland, Frank Tyars, J. Robertson, Henry Howe.

THE CHURCH SCENE IN "MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING."

Painted by J. F.-R.

To face p. 116.

in a room of an hotel in which they were both staying, walked in and said, " I dismiss this meeting in the name of the Queen," and the assembly broke up and filed past him and my brother out of the room without a word.

Always a picture of health and manly beauty, with a fine voice and clear articulation, he conveyed to his audience a feeling of joyousness which was quite infectious. One night, just as he was stooping to unlock a private door to the stage of the Adelphi Theatre, a madman stabbed him in the back. The culprit had been a supermaster dismissed from the theatre by the late Edward Terry, and the madman had confused the names. It was Terry that was to have been the victim. So well did the man do his work that in a few moments poor Terriss lay stark and dead just inside the door. The news spread very rapidly, and was soon all over the Lyceum Theatre, where I was playing Hamlet at the time. Knowing how seriously my friend's death would affect me, my brother Ian urged the members of the company to hold the news from me till after the performance. Quite ignorant of the tragedy therefore, I was about to " go on " for the ghost scene, when I chanced to notice that one of the stage hands near me was in tears, and upon asking him what was the matter, the poor fellow blurted out, " Mr. Terriss has been murdered, sir." Stunned with the shock, I managed to play steadily to the end of the piece, nor could I perceive that any of the company allowed the ghastly news to seriously affect their acting.

The audience was not made aware of the tragedy till after the performance was over, and the play went as well as usual. But strangely enough, there was one of that audience, an American lady, who, I afterwards heard, had said to her companion, "I feel that the people on the stage are under great distress from some bad news, of which we and the rest of the audience are ignorant." The untimely and tragic end of William Terriss was mourned by many thousands, both high and low.

In the summer of 1883 I spent a delightful holiday with my friend and fellow Academy student, George Munn, at a fishing village between Honfleur and Trouville, where we painted hard all the livelong day. Our favourite haunt was the weedy and neglected grounds of the half-ruined Château of Crique Bœuf. Here my friend taught me at least to realize the enormous difficulties of landscape painting, if he taught me nothing else. That we might be fully employed each day, we kept four canvases going, one for a grey morning, a second for a sunny morning, and the like for the afternoon light.

There were several painters of note more or less settled in that enchanting neighbourhood. Notable among them were Maurice Courant, Hennessey, the American painter, who was in great vogue at that time, and Homer Martin, his compatriot, whose landscapes are not outranged anywhere for poetic quality, and there was the beautiful Madame Mazeline, who educated her two sons and kept a bed ridden husband by her facile brush.

How trifling little incidents stick in one's memory ! Here is one. George Munn and I were standing on the sands one evening at low tide watching a glowing and changing sky, with the many shifting reflections in the wet sand, hardly conscious of two chattering ladies, with a little child, some twenty yards away, when the impressiveness of the surroundings was suddenly increased by the sound of the distant booming of big guns at Le Havre. As the reverberations died away, we were brought to earth with a comic shock by the childish, wee voice piping out, " Qui a fait ça, maman ? " To the man who laughed with me till the tears ran down his cheeks, I must set down my tribute, being as he was so intimately wrapped up with my student life, and influencing it to a considerable degree. His was a rare spirit—a steadfast one—and ever unfalteringly true to the highest standards of his art. No petty trafficking or time-serving in his work ever dimmed his soul. He had the rare courage to paint to please himself first, and the public and the buyer—well, they did not count for very much with him. His face was pale, his hair dark and parted in the middle, a mode unusual in those days. The eyes were big and thoughtful in expression. When " a new boy " at the R.A. schools, he ran the gauntlet of the arrogant patronage of the older students with a perfect equanimity.

We were not, however, to hold our hectoring attitude long, for we soon found that what the unusual-looking but gracious young American stranger said

about painting and art in general " went," and we came to hang on his words, uttered with a very slight but most engaging stammer. Having passed through the Academy Schools, he pursued his studies at Julien's and Munkacsy's studios in Paris. Watts chanced to see a copy of one of his works that Munn had made, and said to a friend, " I must have that man work with me," and so it came about that Munn was in daily intercourse with that giant for many months, and amongst other things, he " laid in " all " The Triumph of Death " in distemper for the master to work on.

His landscapes, mostly painted in Brittany and Normandy, were of the highest order, and some indeed as fine as any that have ever been painted. He could draw the branch of a tree that would have satisfied even Ruskin, and his sense of colour and tone was sure and true and his style quite free from affectation. The painters, I should say, who most influenced his work while a student were Pelluse, Mason, Frederick Walker, and pre-eminently Watts.

Reverence for what is best in men and things is the lasting grace for the man who would pursue art : without it he must come to naught, this precious grace George Munn had to the fullest degree. If a man was worth his salt, Munn had that rare gift of making that man " get a fine conceit o' himsel'," as it were, and thus he was a helper, an encourager, an inspirer, a giver of those precious things that help the soul of a man and that all the dollars on earth cannot buy. Farewell, George Munn ! To those who

were blessed in your friendship you are not passed away, for your high spirit of enthusiasm for all that is good and true in life and art remains with us for guidance and help always.

La Belle Normandie called me again next summer, and I took a long, comfortable white house on the outskirts of Honfleur, that I might be near the delightful haunts of the year before. Here I joined my people in August, crossing from Newhaven to Honfleur by a small steamer called *La Reine*. As I remember, it was a twelve-hour night passage, and in the early morn we sighted the coast. I had not seen the house, and asked the captain if he chanced to know its whereabouts. It turned out that he knew the place quite well, and said he would try to pick it up with his glasses as we neared the coast. This, after a while, he did, but much to my amazement, and indeed some concern, he cried, "God bless my soul, what's the matter with the place? Look." He handed me his glasses, and what I saw was quite extraordinary. The house was a mass of white wing-like flames. Almost it seemed a phantom about to float into the crystal-clear morning air. "What on earth does it mean?" said I. He looked again, and then as the boat drew nearer the coast he began to chuckle and laugh, and handing me the glasses again, said, "They are signalling to you." Sure enough, I saw then that every door and window, even to the attics, had an occupant who was waving frantically a bed sheet in such fashion that little roof and no windows could be seen. This amazing

spectacle, it turned out, was produced by the artful contrivance of my brother Norman as a welcome to me. The device highly amused the skipper, who with much enthusiasm ordered a flag to be run up in answer, when the sheet-waving was taken up with renewed vigour.

I had occasion to make several voyages with that same skipper, by the way, and we became great friends. I always shared his cabin, into which he sometimes came for an hour. One particular night he snored abominably. I called out "You're snoring," upon which he rose, and silently stole out into the cold night, bless him! To this day I take shame that I did not call him back.

Our Honfleur house stood commanding on a bluff in a rich orchard, and looked over the Seine's broad mouth, with a clear view toward Le Havre. With the owner of the house, Madame Herbert, a wise and admirable creature, having *les petits economies* strongly in evidence, it was agreed that we were not to touch the fruit, which she duly picked and marketed. But there was a giant fig-tree which we noticed was for some reason never touched by her gatherers. I called on Madame and begged her to sell me the tree, explaining that we were all very fond of figs. "Madame," said I, "what is your price?" "Monsieur," said she, "you can have the tree for three francs!" Figs galore for weeks!

We had left our cook in London, and found a perfect marvel in Honfleur, whither she would go early every morning in spotless cap and apron, with

a huge basket on her arm, returning with the best of everything. Such butter, such eggs, such tender plump chickens, to be cooked as never in England! Bordeaux of the best, and fish straight from the sea.

There was one circumstance about this cook which I must go into. Every now and again the cooking was very indifferent. In a week or so we made the amazing discovery that a rough sea invariably brought about a bad dinner. We did not fathom the mystery for some time, till one blustery afternoon I chanced upon the cook seated near the edge of the cliff, and hidden from view of the house by some shrubs, intently gazing on the troubled waters, with clasped hands, and in tears. I asked her what was amiss. She rose, and pointing out to sea, said in a dry tone, "Mon mari, il est là." Appearing on the crest of a wave, and the next moment hidden from view, I made out what I knew to be the crazy little cockle-shell of a steamer which daily plied between Honfleur and Le Havre battling with big seas. She told me her husband was the stoker on board this wretched boat. The mystery was solved! We stood leaning against the wind watching till the unseaworthy craft made port, when I consoled the young woman as best I could.

For the rest of our stay the wind never blew again heavily, and our devoted cook was all smiles, and so were we, for there were no more bad dinners!

In November 1883 I, for the third time, became a member of the Bancrofts' company to play in Arthur Pinero's *Lords and Commons*, and remained

with them till they retired from management in July 1885. It was always a pleasure to return to the Bancrofts' management, and now I was to take a more prominent position in their company than I had hitherto done, and to play for the first time in one of Pinero's pieces. Pinero, one soon realized, had not only a clear and definite idea of how he wanted his characters interpreted, but, from his long training as an actor, he was able to impart his views at rehearsal in a practical manner.

Of all the many dramatists I had come across, he was by far and away the best in this particular. Only one since have I met who had a like gift, and he was Bernard Shaw. Mrs. Stirling played the part of a noble dame in *Lords and Commons* to perfection, and after we had had a revival of *Peril*, she was a faultless Mrs. Malaprop in an elaborate revival of *The Rivals*, for which I designed the dresses. Pinero was Sir Anthony, and I played Captain Absolute, and am persuaded that never has there been so bad a performance of the part. *Diplomacy* and *Masks and Faces* were revived, and now came to an end the management that had done so much for the stage. On the last night the house was packed with a distinguished audience. Many bright lights in the law, literature, and art were there to say farewell to the Bancrofts, who had held the respect and love of the actors and of the theatre-going public for so many years.

During the run of *The Rivals* Pinero and I dressed in the same room. One night, some others of the

company being present, he invented the following duologue between two coster girls—I think I must have been giving myself some airs :

First girl (looking at my photograph in a shop window) : " Oh, I do love that Roberson ! "

Second girl : " Ah, so did I once, till I see 'im outside the stage door in a bowler 'at. That was enough for me ! "

In those days few in London wore bowler hats.

Some years after, when Sir John Hare and he were casting his play of *Lady Bountiful*, they were at some trouble to find a lady suitable to one of the leading parts. They went to see several performances in the hope of finding what they wanted, and amongst others to the Globe Theatre, in which Wilson Barrett was playing, and which he had quite lately redecorated ; indeed, the walls were still very damp. Hare had invited me to join them, and I found him in some concern about the dampness of the box. The beautiful Miss Lily Hanbury, I remember, came rushing on to the stage in a scene in which the only line she had to say was " They are coming down the street," referring to a turbulent mob. So dramatically did she speak that line—we none of us had seen her before —that I said to Pinero, " That's the girl you want," at which he remarked, " There you are, Forbie, carried away by a pretty face, as usual." In this, perhaps, there may have been a modicum of truth, but at any rate we went behind at the end of the play to see if Barrett would release Miss Hanbury, but he would not spare her. While in the box Hare had

his overcoat on, the collar of which was turned up, and was still grumbling about the damp. Pinero whispered me the following: "After one of Mr. Wilson Barrett's wonderfully delivered emotional speeches, on looking round the theatre it was discovered there was not a dry wall in the house!"

In the days of Jack the Ripper, the undiscovered monster who murdered and mutilated unfortunate women in the by-ways of east London, some of us at the Club were discussing the crimes, when one said: "I wonder what his mother would say, did she know of her son's deeds," at which Pinero chimed in, "I've no doubt she would say, 'Well, Jack may 'ave 'is faults, but 'e's been a good son to me.'"

It was my great fortune in the seventies and eighties to be on intimate terms with J. L. Toole, though I never acted with him. What a genial creature he was, full of the joy of life, and with a most sympathetic disposition. A farce actor *par excellence*, but when called upon to strike a pathetic note, he was by no means found wanting, and indeed would quickly draw his audience into the melting mood. In his acting he had the power of conveying wistfulness better, I think, than any actor I have known. He always took the "Busman's Holiday" with the greatest enthusiasm, and many a kind word of encouragement did he give me after some effort of mine. This encouragement I greatly rejoiced in, for "good words" from any members of my calling were ever far more precious to me than the highest compliments from outsiders.

He and Irving, from quite young men, were very close friends, and they were always indulging in some delightful nonsense or other. Once when they were on a theatrical tour together, the train stopped at Bury St. Edmund's. Toole put his head out of the window and calling the station-master with an air of much anxiety and importance, asked him what time was the funeral.

"What funeral, sir? You've made some mistake; there's no funeral here."

"There's no mistake, my good man. We've come to Bury St. Edmund's." "Yes," said Irving, "that is so," and to the amazement of the station-master, they both got out of the carriage looking very solemn, repeating, "Yes, yes, we've come to Bury St. Edmund's," and then mixing in the crowd got into another part of the train.

Toole delighted in telling the following in the presence of Irving. It was a dream story to the effect that after a long uphill walk he found himself at the gates of Heaven, hot and thirsty. He pulled the bell, and presently Peter opened the wicket with "Who are you?" Mastering a great temptation to ask him for a drink, he said, "My name is Toole." "What were you on earth?" "An actor." "No actors admitted," said Peter, and slammed the door. Toole was going away disconsolate, when presently he saw the gaunt figure of his friend Irving at some distance striding toward the gate. Irving rang the bell, the wicket was opened, and after a short talk, to Toole's consternation the gate was flung wide,

and Irving stalked in! Toole, in great indignation, hurried back, rang the bell, and when Peter opened to him, he said, "Look here, you said no actors were admitted. Now I have just seen you let in one." "Indeed," said Peter, "who's that?" "Why, Henry Irving." "Oh, that's all right, he's no actor!"

CHAPTER IX

FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA

St. Gaudens—Edwin Booth—General Sherman—Mrs. Jefferson Davis—John Hay—Henry Adams—Henry L. Higginson—Miss Mary Anderson—England again—Edwin Abbey—Frank Millett—John Sargent—William Stead—John Hare—A Command Performance—Queen Victoria—The Empress Eugénie—Charles Frohman—Frank Lockwood—Revivals of *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII*—Gladstone—Opening of the Garrick Theatre.

ONE MONTH AFTER the eventful farewell of the Bancrofts I was crossing the Atlantic in the *Gallia*, having been engaged by Henry Abbey to be Miss Mary Anderson's leading man for an extensive tour in America. The *Gallia* was a small ship, well found with wholesome food, though roughly served, the saloons and cabins lit by oil lamps. At table there was a swinging rack in which pepper and salt and wine bottles, etc., were carefully stowed. This rack was never stationary when you wanted it, but would be one moment high over your head, and the next moment over the heads of those on the other side of the table.

The *Gallia* used to set a lot of sail, both on the fore mast and the main, and it was a great sight to watch her from the wheel-house climb slowly up the mountain waves, and then plunge down again. Most of the cabin ways opened on to the saloon, and

the air was heavy with the smell of cooking and oil lamps. One morning I woke to find that my steamer trunk, hat-box, etc., were gone. It had been a night of rolling, alternated by pitching and tossing. I had left my cabin door open for better air, and discovered that my property had wandered out and down the passage into the saloon ! One article, however, was faithful to me. It was my handbag ; this had jumped up from the floor and lodged itself on my person !

The approach from the sea to New York was not imposing and magical in 1885 as it is now. There was, I think, only one skyscraper, known as the Flatiron Building, and it had no architectural merit which those built within the last twenty years or so may certainly claim to have. I was set down at the Victoria Hotel, which was considered up town in those days. A bed and bath room and excellent food for three dollars and a half a day !

Miss Anderson had six plays in her repertoire during this tour : *Pygmalion and Galatea*, *Tragedy and Comedy*, *Ingomar*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *As You Like It*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. With Orlando and Romeo I was familiar, but the other parts were new to me. We opened in New York with *As You Like It*, at the Park Theatre in Union Square. Then followed *Romeo and Juliet*, which held the boards for several weeks. During this time I painted Miss Anderson's portrait in the studio of my friend, the late Edwin Blashfield, he being called away at the time on some big mural work.

I remember Mrs. Barrett, the wife of Lawrence Barrett, helping me to get the particular kind of stuff I wanted for Miss Anderson's dress. Pretty fabrics were not so easy to come by in those days. The portrait did not do my sitter justice, but it was a fairly good likeness. It now hangs in the picture gallery at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon, the gift of Miss Anderson.

I think what struck me most on my first visit to America was the sunlight that streamed into my bedroom every morning. It was daily a delightful surprise, and filled me with wonder for some time. My brother Norman and others had given me letters of introduction, and in a few days I was made free of most of the leading clubs and received hospitality and the greatest kindness from many people. This welcome and the sunshine cheered me in my exile.

I met several people in the art world, amongst others, Edwin Blashfield, William Chase, and the greatest sculptor of his time, St. Gaudens. I remember Hamo Thornycroft's remark to me before I sailed, " You will meet St. Gaudens. I envy you. He is at the head and front of all us sculptors ! "

At the house of William Dean Howells in Boston I met another giant, one of my own calling, and he was Salvini. I found him ready to talk about anything but himself and his art. The wonderful Othello I had seen some years before was not to be drawn.

Edwin Booth I knew well, a most winning personality, modest and unassuming, utterly unspoilt, in spite of his being for so many years the idol of the American public. He showed his love for his brother actors by building them a beautiful and unique club, The Players, the like of which is not anywhere. During the latter part of his life he lived in two rooms at the top of the club, in one of which he died, and which to this day the members keep with loving care exactly as he left it. Thus his memory is kept green by The Players' Club, and also by the Booth Theatre so admirably conducted by Mr. Winthrop Ames.

One night in St. Louis I was waiting in the wings to go on for the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, when my arm was gripped as in a vice. I turned round, and there in the gloom towering above me was a man with a close-cropped, grizzled beard which melted into a ruddy and wrinkled face, a severe mouth, and piercing eyes. It was General Sherman ! In a firm, deep voice he said :

" My name's Sherman."

" Yes, sir, I know."

" Mary's coming to supper with us to-night ; you must come."

" I shall be delighted."

" Good."

I felt like saluting, but at that moment the curtain was rung up and on I bounded with, " He jests at scars that never felt a wound," and rubbing my arm where the General had gripped it !

The supper-party was a delightful one and composed of eight or ten people. I was placed on Mrs. Sherman's left. She was a charming, plump little Irish lady. On my referring to some very bad pictures of various engagements hanging round the room, she described each picture, winding up with, "Yes, the General was there!" The Drama was toasted, and Miss Anderson's health, and mine, the President's health, and then, not the Queen of England, but simply "The Queen," the grace of which moved me. I afterwards discovered that the gentlefolk of America (pardon the term, you great Democracy) always referred to her as "The Queen," and never in any other way.

Strangely enough the very next week I met the Misses Lee in Louisville, the daughters of General Lee. Thus I passed, so to speak, from one camp to the other. In those days the feeling in the South against the North was still very marked.

I recall with a deal of pleasure my friendship with Mrs. Jefferson Davis and her beautiful daughter, Miss Winnie. They had a great love for England, and often expressed a longing to cross the Atlantic, but the mother told me they could not afford to do so. Her life was occupied in looking after such property as remained to her. She died, not in her beloved South, but at a modest hotel in Buffalo.

We visited thirty towns after we left New York, in all of which Miss Anderson was most successful. We worked gradually out to the Pacific Coast, taking Denver and Salt Lake City on the way. I remember

that on arriving at the former town we could get nothing to eat for some time, as they were having a rat hunt in the dining-room of the hotel !

Salt Lake City was a very beautiful town in those days, there being gardens to almost all the houses, and stone conduits of water from the mountains on each side of the street, about two feet wide and a foot deep, just below the level of the pavement. The wooden houses of the Mormons were well built, and many of them had an annex at right angles to the front of the main house, in which the wives lived. Brigham Young built a beautiful theatre, but it appears he regretted doing so, as there was naturally no drama in harmony with his polygamous tastes. The theatre stands to this day, one of the finest in the country. On my last visit I ventured to urge the citizens not to allow it to be pulled down for "improvements."

From Salt Lake City we made Sacramento. For months we had seen nothing but snow, with patches of black earth here and there, and the train having passed through the gloomy gorges of the Sierra Nevada in the night, we found ourselves at daybreak in the lovely green valley of Sacramento, and had strawberries with our breakfast ! Sacramento was Miss Anderson's birthplace, so there was a great to-do, with an official luncheon and speeches. The next day we were off to the fascinating San Francisco. Here we played two weeks. I put up at the Palace Hotel, vast and splendid, then the biggest hotel in America, and indeed in the world. Hundreds of

people could dine at one time in the huge dining-room, and I was much struck with a negro servant, who took one's hat at the door without giving a numbered ticket, and returned every man his hat as he went out from his meal, and was never known to make a mistake.

One day, wandering over the hills overlooking the bay, I saw lying at anchor a great white man-of-war. I was hungry for home, and when I discovered she was flying the White Ensign I was full of gladness.

That day, while seated at luncheon, appeared at the door a British bluejacket questioning the head waiter, who presently brought him down the long hall. I said to myself, " Who is the lucky man who evidently is to get some message from my country's ship ? On came the two men nearer and nearer. Heavens ! Could it be possible ? Yes—no—yes, the huge sailor actually stood saluting by my side. He had brought a letter from the captain inviting me to take luncheon with him on board the next day. My dear friend, the late Sir William Wiseman, had timed my visit to San Francisco, and had cabled the captain about me from far Aberdeen, where he was then stationed.

While in San Francisco I became acquainted with Alfred Collins, a young painter of great promise, and who in after years took a high position. Had he lived, he must have won for himself world-wide fame. Some of his portraits now hang in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. He painted a portrait of me in five or six sittings in masterly fashion.

After the termination of the engagement in San Francisco we made a long jump back to Chicago for a return visit. At that time this journey took six days. There was no such thing as a dining-car, but the train stopped three times a day for meals which were not fit to eat. I remember that upon this journey the man in charge of the theatre baggage, a delightful cockney named Bennett, was one night strolling on the platform, with a big cigar, waiting for the train to continue the journey, when we exchanged a few words. We had been three days and nights on the train, and he knew we were only half-way to our destination. This fact was evidently disturbing him, for suddenly he said :

" I don't think so much of Christopher Columbus findin' this 'ere country, sir."

" Indeed, Bennett, why ? "

" Such a doose of a size—don't see how he could miss it."

Bennett was a useful member of the company. He had great combats all over the stage with three or four supers at a time in *Romeo and Juliet.* He would also lend a hand at dressing some of the company. One night when we were playing *As You Like It,* he was helping to dress my friend Mr. Arthur Lewis, who had to go on as understudy for the man who played Oliver, I being Orlando, when the following conversation took place :

" You're going to play Mr. Robertson's brother to-night, ain't you, Mr. Lewis ? "

" Yes, I am."

J. F.-R.

Painted by the late Alfred Collins.

To face p. 136.

"Well, seein' as you're goin' to be 'is brother for this evenin', don't you think you're hentitled, in a position, so to speak, to 'ast 'im to lend me five dollars!"

Rarely did one meet an Englishman in New York at that time, but one day while sitting at breakfast I felt a hand upon my shoulder, and on looking up I saw, beaming down upon me, the handsome face of Randolph Caldicott. He had come over to sojourn in Florida for his health's sake. Some months afterwards he passed away, but not before he had made many friends, and several of them, prominent New York men, went all the way to Florida to pay him their last tribute and to help the widow through her terrible ordeal. Caldicott had won for himself a world-wide fame by the beauty, fancy, and humour of his art, the main feature of which was its originality.

While in Washington it was my good fortune to meet John Hay and his friend, Henry Adams. They had just built themselves houses next each other, and in the delight of their new homes they were like a couple of children each with a new toy, and very beautiful the new toys were, for their architect was the famous Richardson, of Boston, the pioneer of broad and dignified proportions in interior decoration of domestic houses in America. A poet, sometime private secretary to Lincoln, and eventually Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, John Hay had a charm and simplicity of manner that was irresistible. He possessed that valuable gift of remembering faces and names, for I recall his being at a

large dinner-party in London when he came up to me and talked of my being at his house. We had not met since my visit to Washington twelve years before.

In the Rock Creek Cemetery to the north-east of Washington, encircled by cedar and spruce-trees, is a monument put up by Mr. Adams in memory of his wife, the like of which for beauty and grandeur in modern sculpture is not in the world. It is a bronze seated figure, swathed in a thick drapery, part of which is over the head casting a deep shadow on the face. It has all the nobility and simplicity of Greek art. It fills the onlooker with awe and reverence, for it is the perfect symbol of death and yet of hope. Almost one fancies that at any moment this sublime creation might invest itself with life and speak of the hereafter. This, to my mind, is St. Gaudens's masterpiece. The lover of the plastic art, were he to journey to that spot from afar by sea and land, stand in the presence of that inspiring figure, and then, at once, return from whence he came, would feel it was worth the pilgrimage, and be thankful.

Many friends I made in Boston on that tour of 1885–6, and they have remained my friends to this day. Conspicuous amongst them was Mr. Henry L. Higginson, who had been a colonel in the Federal Army. He inaugurated about forty years ago or more the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and supported it at great financial loss to himself for many years. At last his efforts to encourage

a love of high-class music were crowned with success, and the great concert hall is now crowded at every performance during the season. The energy and enthusiasm of this one man has been the direct cause of the love of the best in music being fostered all over the country, for now, following Boston's lead, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco, not to mention many other cities, have their own orchestras, and complete success attends their efforts.

The tour ended with a return visit to New York, and then, ho ! for England and green fields ! Miss Anderson was on the same boat, as she was due in England to organize a season at the Lyceum in the autumn. She had elected to revive *The Winter's Tale*, which proved a very great success. Her performance of Hermione was as noble and imposing as her Perdita was the very embodiment of joyous youth and beauty. The doubling of parts by an actor is seldom satisfactory, but in this case the result was admirable, and drew the town for seven months. I played Leontes and designed the dresses for the play.

During the run Edwin Abbey sometimes came into my dressing-room for a chat. One night I was sitting dressed in my sleeveless robes when Abbey, looking at my arms, said with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, " Robertson, Marcus Stone says your arms are very good. They are nothing particular, are they ? " I had met Abbey the year before in Broadway, Worcestershire, when he was staying with

his brother painter, Frank Millett, and thither came Alfred Parsons and John Sargent. Abbey worked mostly in black and white at that time, and was making beautiful illustrations of Shakespeare's plays for *Harper's Magazine*. He was inclined to idle, and his friends had much ado to keep him at his work. I think Sargent was about his picture of "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose."

I found him one day in a small room making a vivid study of still life, when he asked me to give him a sitting for a head in a black and white illustration. Alfred Parsons was putting on canvas in his inimitable way a corner of Millett's garden.

Millett himself was upon one of his delightful subject pictures—all, in short, hard at work, except that mercurial, ever-joyous Abbey, but it did not seem to matter, for such was the facile energy of his pen when he did condescend to work, he was always up to time, and his publishers, I believe, were never disappointed. His efforts in after years were prodigious when he took up colour, as witness the noble decorations in the Boston Library and his many subject pictures year by year exhibited at the Royal Academy, of which he was early made a full member.

Frank Millett was most versatile, and could turn his hand to many things, from fixing up electric contrivances in his house to being War Correspondent in the Russo-Turkish War. In the latter part of his life he devoted much of his time to all sorts of committees and undertakings in various directions

for the advancement and help of American artists, and was returning to America from an art conference in Rome when he met his death in the sinking of the *Titanic*.

That ill-fated ship robbed me of another friend, one also full of usefulness and good works, hopeful, and helpful, and he was William Stead. He had had a prejudice against the stage all his life, and never went to the play. In my dressing-room one night, after the third act of *Hamlet*, he told me this, and then added most earnestly, " I know now that it was a foolish prejudice, and I deeply regret I was under the influence so long, but my eyes have been opened and I fully realize the importance of the theatre as an educational power and all its capacity for good. I admit I was quite wrong, it was one of the mistakes of my life, and I am moved to-night to make this confession to you."

On my return from America in the spring of 1886 we took a farm-house on Holy Island, lying in the beautiful bay of Lamlash in the island of Arran. Thither we went, fifteen all told. This exodus from London turned out to be the last we were to make as a family.

From Ardrossan, by one of McBrain's boats, we made Lamlash Pier, and from thence we crossed the bay in open sailing boats, a distance of about two miles, to the farm-house, the only dwelling on the island. We had to go over to Lamlash for everything, and it was at times hard to keep the mixed cargo dry while crossing, as squalls would make a sudden

swoop with little warning upon our open boat from the romantic mountains of Arran. On the arrival of a telegram the obliging postmaster of Lamlash would run up the Union Jack as a signal, when a couple of us would hoist sail and run or tack for the pier. I could handle a sailing boat satisfactorily, but my brother Ian was by far the better navigator.

His little daughter, Beatrice, then aged three, who, during the years of the war, eloquently enlightened the people on the Great Cause all over America under the auspices of Mr. Hoover, was already beginning to show a lively and observant mind. Leaning over the side of the boat one calm day, and peering into the water which in those parts is so clear that one may see far down into its depths, she suddenly expressed herself thus : " There are three worlds, the world of the water, the world of the air, and the world of the land ! "

When first we stepped safely on the island there was a great rush to see what out new home was like. In the big kitchen we were much exercised at the sight of two enormous clothes-horses standing about eight feet high, and wide in proportion, ranged in front of the open hearth. We had not been long on the island, however, before we discovered the reason of their ungainly presence, and were much beholden to them. " Of all the airts the winds can blaw, I dearly lo' the west." Yes, but—well ! On one occasion, it having rained unceasingly for about a week, I passed the time of day to a native with the remark that it was very wet. " Oh, no," said he,

" it's no weet ; just soft, and shoowers between, but no weet ! "

Of this same Arran man, I, being about to hoist sail for the island, inquired if the wind would get up. He replied very deliberately : " Well, maybe aye, and maybe no," and then evidently fearing he had committed himself to a too definite statement, he said, " and maybe "—a pause, and then with closed lips—" hum, hum ! " Nevertheless, wind or rain, and there was a plenty of both, we all had a glorious time.

After being with Miss Anderson for two years, I found myself drifting from one theatre to another for some time. Amongst other parts, I played Orlando in a revival of *As You Like It*, by Miss Wallis, when she opened the Shaftesbury Theatre. One night the iron safety curtain, having been let down, could not be raised again, and I was asked to go in front and from a box dismiss the audience ; and the theatre remained closed for two or three days. I also played the part of Arthur Dimsdale in a stage version of *The Scarlet Letter* by my brother Norman and Stephen Coleridge at the Royalty Theatre.

Then came an event important in the theatrical world, in the opening of the Garrick Theatre by John Hare on April 24, 1889, when he produced *The Profligate*, by Arthur Pinero, which had a very great success. Miss Kate Rorke, Miss Olga Nethersole, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Sidney Brough, Lewis Waller, and John Hare himself were in the cast. The play in a great measure was epoch making, and several

of a like nature, though very inferior, followed in its wake. I played the part of Dunstan Renshaw, the profligate. Towards the end of the piece he, in great despair, is about to take poison, when his better self predominating, he throws the glass from him. One night, just as I was going to take the fatal dose, a woman in the gallery cried out, "Don't take it, sir," and a male voice remarked, "Shut up, you silly cat!" In a way, this interruption was a compliment, but rather disturbing.

Sir John Hare once told me of a compliment he had had from the front, but this was a silent interruption. When playing Eccles in *Caste* one night, in the scene when he is alone on the stage trying to find in his various pockets some tobacco, and at last getting only a little dust from his waistcoat pocket, which he emptied on the table and began with great care to gather into his pipe, a man in the gallery was moved to throw his pouch of tobacco on the stage, which fell at the actor's feet!

The late E. S. Willard was to have been in the cast of *The Profligate*, but he seceded from the company and went to America, where he eventually became a great favourite, taking with him two of Henry Arthur Jones's most powerful plays, *The Middleman* and *Judah*, both of which had had long runs in London.

The Profligate was followed by an elaborate and beautiful production of Sardou's *La Tosca*, ably done into English by Henry Hamilton. Edwin Abbey designed the dresses, and no pains, trouble, or cost was spared by Hare to make the whole play a picture

of the time and place. The part of Scarpia, which fell to me, has always been associated in my mind with a very uncanny experience. One night, as I lay "dead," having been stabbed by Mrs. Bernard Beere, I felt something fall lightly on my forehead. Mrs. Bernard Beere's business was to blow out all the candles except two, leaving the room very dark. I took the opportunity the moment the lights were lowered to blow away what I thought might be some large piece of dust that had fallen from the flies, when the piece of dust began to crawl rapidly over my face, neck and ears. I could feel the pattering of the thing's many feet. This I had to endure for some time as La Tosca went slowly through a considerable ceremony of putting two candles at my head and a crucifix on my breast. As Mrs. Bernard Beere approached me with the candles, I murmured some words to the effect that she should chase the thing away ; she evidently did not hear me, for her only answer was to spill some of the grease on to my twitching face. At long last the curtain fell and I searched for my visitor, but in vain. A trivial circumstance enough, but, after a long and nerve-trying scene, magnified into horror.

On one of Hare's provincial tours *Diplomacy* was given after a long run at the Garrick, with a very strong cast, consisting of Lady—then Mrs.—Bancroft, Lady Monckton, Miss Kate Rorke, and that brilliant writer Miss Elizabeth Robins, Gilbert Hare, Bancroft, Arthur Cecil, and John Hare.

During the tour a command performance was given

at Balmoral. It seems the Queen took the greatest interest in the preparations, inspecting the special scenery that had been painted, and being shown how it was worked, and entering into various details of the fitting-up of the stage in the ballroom. She had invited the Empress Eugénie, who was staying at Abergeldie, to witness the performance. After the play was over, and as the Queen was about to leave the ballroom, she turned to the Empress next her on her right and motioned her to go out first. Upon this the Empress protested with a curtsey, but the Queen again made the same motion, the Empress again protesting. The Queen motioned for a third time, when at last the lonely private lady passed out before the Queen of England. We had the story of this graceful incident from Lady Hare, who was in the audience.

Having changed our dresses, the whole company was received by the Queen, and we were individually presented, her many guests forming a circle round the room. Amongst them were the Empress Eugénie, the Duke and Duchess of Fife, Prince and Princess Henry of Battenburg, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who was in attendance at the time.

I was introduced to the Empress Eugénie, and as I stood before her making my bow, suddenly in a flash my mind carried me back many years to the first glimpse I had of her, when a little boy. It was in the Champs Élysées, where I was walking with my father and mother. Far up towards the Arc de Triomphe we noticed a single carriage coming down,

and my father told me it must be the Imperial carriage because, as it passed a regiment of soldiers going up the Champs Élysées, the compact mass of troops curved back swiftly, and melted into a thin line presenting arms. The human wave seemed automatically produced, so exactly did the falling back of the men coincide with the movement of the lonely carriage. On it came, sweeping past within a few yards of us. The Empress was seated in an open carriage with the Emperor, who appeared shorter by half a head than his wife. We had a perfect view of them, as there were few people about. We gazed upon that wonderful profile, and the next moment the smiling face was turned to us as she acknowledged my mother's curtsey and the uncovering on the part of my father and myself. I was in the kilt, and perhaps it was only my fancy that she gave me a special glance. This was in the summer of 1861, and now here was I, in the autumn of 1893, face to face with this wonderful woman, who in these thirty-two years had suffered and endured so much. The remnants of her great beauty were still there. Still the perfect symmetry of feature, a beautiful old woman! The skin of her neck and face were of a healthy-looking tan, and crisscrossed with minute and delicate wrinkles, not visible at a little distance. She was entirely in black, with a touch of colour on her left breast in the ribbons of some orders, which looked as if they might have been her husband's. The bodice had a small V-shaped opening at the throat, and what little of the

chest was seen, white and smooth as a young girl's ! The face was full of animation and smiles as she said, " You may imagine how much I have enjoyed myself this evening when I tell you that I have not seen a play for twenty-three years. The last time I was in a theatre was at the Français a few nights before the declaration of war."

I was so fortunate as to remain a member of Hare's company for six years, being allowed to play elsewhere at intervals. Once, to go to New York for a few weeks, and on two occasions to join Irving at the Lyceum. The New York trip was made to play in a very indifferent piece by Sardou, called *Thermidor*, which was one of Charles Frohman's earliest ventures. Frohman was a very remarkable and interesting character, with a real love and enthusiasm for the stage, very unusual in the theatrical manager who is not an actor. He rose from humble beginnings to become a sort of Napoleon of the American theatrical world. His never-to-be-forgotten utterance as the *Lusitania* went down, sunk by the unimaginative and dastardly Hun, was inspired, and of all the sayings that are recorded of men on the point of death, there is nothing more noble in its brevity, its courage, and its hint of faith than his quotation from Barrie, " Now for the great adventure."

On an occasion when he was taking the rehearsal of a scene, he asked a celebrated actress to make certain movements which did not appear to recommend themselves to the lady, who said somewhat impatiently, " Mr. Frohman, you seem to forget that I am an

artist," he immediately replied, " Madam, I will keep your secret ! "

Both he and his brother Daniel, who was a prominent New York manager long before Charles became known, and who shares his enthusiasm for the actor's art, were highly esteemed for their integrity and just dealings, as Daniel Frohman, now the doyen of American managers, is to this day.

While acting in *Thermidor*, I received a cablegram from Irving asking me to play Buckingham in *Henry VIII*, a revival he was at work on against January 1892. Having got Hare's permission, I accepted the part. On my return to London the preparations for this beautiful production were well advanced.

I had, as a child, seen Charles Kean's revival of *Henry VIII* at the Princess's, and strangely enough the deep impression I then received stood me in good stead. I must have been very young, for my mother in after years told me that I talked loudly in my excitement during the performance, and that she told me if I was not quiet the little man in red (Kean as the Cardinal) would come into the box and turn us out of the theatre. Buckingham's farewell remained strongly in my mind, and John Ryder's " archæological figure," as he himself was pleased to describe his person, towering above the devoted crowds, in his black habit against the background of the river and distant houses, stuck always in my memory. Coming on to the stage for my first rehearsal, there was the wonderful scene that had so impressed the child—the

quay, the great barge, the river, and the distant Surrey side. But I saw at once that something was wrong ; my Buckingham would not be able to dominate the throng as Ryder's had done. The wall of the quay was too low ! Not liking to blurt out at once that the height of the quay would not serve, I have to confess that I resorted to a mild diplomacy, and ventured to suggest that there might be just one extra step leading up to the barge. Irving said at once to the stage manager :

"Loveday, another step."

"Yes, governor, another step, more effective, and——"

"Yes, my boy, I know—get another step."

A day or two after when the scene was again set, I proposed a second step, and got it. On another occasion, in spite of Loveday's protestations, I mounted a third, and at last could dominate the crowd.

The sumptuous dresses were designed by the late Seymour Lucas, a high authority on costumes. I was not quite satisfied, however, with the execution robe of cloth he had given me, and spoke with Irving on the matter. Said he, "Lucas is coming to-night to inspect the dresses ; put on the robe, come to my room, and we'll see about it."

I went to his room at the appointed hour, where I found Irving deeply seated in an arm-chair, and behind him in a semi-circle were ranged Bram Stoker, Loveday, Seymour Lucas, and Miss Terry. This audience I was not prepared for, but I faced the ordeal,

and frankly said I did not think the costume rich enough for Buckingham. Chorus of protest from behind the chair. "It's a beautiful dress, most becoming, most correct, etc.," and a special thrust from Miss Terry :

"You don't want to show off your legs before that cloth of river and sky, do you ?"

"No."

"Then that long robe will hide them."

There was general laughter and approval. All this time not a word from Irving, nor did his pale face give a sign of which side he was on, mine or theirs. At last he rose and came slowly across the room to me, handled the robe, and turning round sharply said, "Ah, I shouldn't wear it !" "No," said Stoker and Loveday in chorus, and Miss Terry had a fit of laughter. The robe, at my suggestion, was eventually made in black velvet and fur.

The morning after the first night I was riding in the Park with Frank Lockwood, who had been of the audience the night before. For over an hour we spoke of many things, but not a word of the grand revival of *Henry VIII.* People had been very kind about my performance, and I was much disappointed that my old friend did not "pass me a compliment," as we say in Scotland. Just, however, as he was about to leave the Row, he pulled up and called back to me, "I say, Robertson, that was a damned long speech of yours last night." I shook my fist at him as he rode away laughing.

Lockwood, I remember, was always amused at

his friend, the late Maclean of Lochbuie's Highland custom of having himself and his wife announced at any gathering as Mrs. Maclean and Lochbuie. One night it chanced that Mr. and Mrs. Lockwood followed close on the heels of their friends as they were announced in this fashion. Lockwood, when asked by the butler, "What name, sir?" said, much to the disgust of the Scot who was within earshot talking to his hostess, "Mrs. Lockwood and 52 Harley Street!" Having once to defend a man called Day in a breach of promise case brought by a lady named Week, the case coming to a sudden conclusion by the parties deciding to make it up and be married, Lockwood wrote the following on a piece of paper and handed it up to the judge :—

> One day the more, one week the less
> But we should not complain,
> There'll soon be little Days enough
> To make a week again.

But to return to the Lyceum. Loveday was always much concerned at Irving's lavish expenditure on the furnishing of the stage, who would discard at once any property or scene, no matter what it cost, if it did not quite satisfy him. I remember on one occasion I was sitting in Irving's dressing-room while he was making up, when Loveday came in with a very beautiful sceptre he had had made for *Richard III.* He drew it from its case and showed it to Irving with much pride. Irving handled it for a moment, and said sharply, "No good, too heavy." Poor Loveday appealed to me silently from behind Irving's chair,

with a most eloquent look as who should say, " What is to be done with this man ? " Upon this I seized the sceptre and waved it about, walking up and down saying, " Too heavy ? Oh, no ! It's got to be heavy. It is not a fairy's wand, it's an imposing sceptre. Please stand up and try it properly." Irving said meekly, " Is it ? Well, let's see." He got up and paced the room, trying it this way and that ; then turning to Loveday said very humbly, " Thank you, Loveday. Yes, it's a nice sceptre. I'll use it." Loveday was all beams, and his look of gratitude to me I shall never forget.

A friend of mine took her daughter, aged seven, to see *Henry VIII*, and when Buckingham's farewell scene was over, and the headsman had passed away with his victim on the barge, the child said : " Mother, I suppose the headsman only gives Mr. Forbes-Robertson a little chop ! "

One night as I went on for the opening scene of *Henry VIII*, I was conscious of a lonely figure in the O.P. corner of the stage, pale of face with gleaming eyes. I presently realized it was Mr. Gladstone, which very nearly made me " dry up." It seems it was Irving's custom whenever Gladstone came to the play to ensconce him in that particular corner on a small wooden fixed seat on which was a cushion, his party remaining in the box in front. After the act was over, Irving very kindly sent for me and presented me to Gladstone. I said something to the effect that his presence made us all very nervous and anxious. Then in the deepest toned voice I ever

heard, he said, " I recall a story of John Philip Kemble and Hazlitt. On a certain evening Hazlitt came to Kemble's dressing-room and said : ' My dear Kemble, you are surpassing yourself to-night ! What is the meaning of it ? ' Said Kemble, ' Don't you know the reason ? Byron is in front ! ' " Other stories of the stage he told, and with such concentration and enthusiasm, he gave one the feeling that the one and only thing that really interested him was the Drama and its interpretation. The curious composition of the group struck me : the two actors, one in scarlet silk, the other in black velvet, and the stately figure of the old man in his formal and somewhat old-fashioned evening dress. On returning to my dressing-room I said to myself those two men could have changed places, for Irving would have made a statesman of note and Gladstone a fine actor. Had the fates so decreed, each could have held the other's place with dignity and success.

CHAPTER X

THEATRICAL MANAGEMENT

Bayreuth—Sir Ralph Moore—Miss Lena Ashwell—Irving and his Speeches—Mrs. Patrick Campbell—Charles Coghlan—John Davidson—Captain Robert Marshall.

In the summer of 1892, travelling with my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Earl, of Tonbridge, I witnessed several of the Wagner performances at Bayreuth, and was greatly assisted in their enjoyment by the late Carl Ambruster, who took me through the various themes of *Tannhäuser* and *Parsifal* on the piano the day before going to the theatre. The Bayreuth representations were stimulating and impressive. This great opera-house, so perfect for sound, and so well planned for the audience to pass in and out with ease and celerity, the wonderful orchestra, the perfectly drilled chorus, the scenic display—all these things were admirable. But, alas! there was one jarring note. The costumes were atrocious! Whether there has been an improvement in the German taste since, I do not know, but it would appear that in those days the costumes had to be in colour and design exactly as Wagner had laid down many years before, even to the number of yards in a lady's skirt. The result of this slavish adherence to

the master's will was unfortunate, for more frumpish bundles of discordant colour and shapeless form were surely never seen.

On the other hand, the scenery, with the exception of one scene in *Parsifal*—a bower of flowering shrubs, coarse and vulgar in colour—was very beautiful. The effects were produced by the painter's brush and the lighting only. Transparencies there were, and cut cloths, but no built scenery; as a consequence, everything was in proper proportion and the illusions were perfect. As my friend Louis N. Parker once pointed out, it was hard to believe that the great interior of the temple in *Parsifal*, for instance, was not a solid structure, until one had seen it all rolled up and put away on a shelf.

I was taken all over this wonderfully arranged theatre, and found the stage equipped for every sort of device for lighting and for the movement of the scenery. Almost every yard of the stage was intersected with permanent grooves for the raising or lowering of cloths, a contrivance known in the stage carpenter's parlance as a "sink and fly." The dressing-rooms were clean and airy, every one of them with windows giving on to the pine woods which surrounded the opera-house. The conductor's seat in the orchestra is so placed that he has a perfect view of the whole stage and all his musicians, though both he and his band are entirely hidden from the audience.

In Bayreuth there is, or was, a quaint little eighteenth-century theatre in poor preservation, with

much carving and gilding in its rococo auditorium, where it was easy for the imagination to conjure up an audience of folk in powder, hoops, and gay plumage. It appears that this house was offered Wagner by King Ludwig in which to produce his operas, but that Wagner declined it on the ground of its being far too small, whereupon the King took him a little out of the town, and showed him the present site, saying he would build one to Wagner's liking.

I was invited to the Wagner house, and very cordially received by Frau Wagner, imposing of proportions and manner, and, if one may judge by his photographs, the very image of her father, Liszt. I remember two pretty daughters took me to see the library, and were careful to draw my attention to several good editions of Shakespeare. One of these daughters, by the way, married the renegade, Houston Chamberlain.

Sitting one day in a Bayreuth beer-garden, I noticed next to me the proprietor chatting with two obviously English maiden ladies, and heard him ask them if they would like to see what he described as an interesting garment which had been worn by the master. They were enthusiastic at his proposal. He retired, and on his return suddenly produced with pride from behind his back a pair of trousers ! The poor ladies, after some faltering words of thanks, soon retired in confusion. I was permitted, as a great favour, to handle the precious continuations. They were of velvet, very short and wide, and lined throughout with thick silk !

The memory of these unique garments reminds me that on my way to Bayreuth I lost all my luggage. The next day I sought a tailor and a haberdasher. I got a very good suit of grey flannel made in a few hours, but the haberdasher did not meet the situation so well, for he was much disappointed when I declined shirts the front of which were adorned with embroidered portraits of the master surrounded with flutes and harps and other symbols of his muse! The ready-made night-shirts reached only to my middle, and on my telling the shopman, with appropriate gesture, that they appeared to me rather short, he assured me that he himself wore them the same length. He must have been at least six feet in stature, so that settled the matter, and I was fain to take them rather than again wound his feelings. But when it came to the question of ties in the shape of made-up sailor knots of yellow and red, with a portrait of the master in the middle, I was adamant!

After the run of *Henry VIII* I returned to the Garrick Theatre, playing in revivals of *Diplomacy*, *Caste*, and *Money*. During the run of *Diplomacy* I was obliged to quit the cast through a bad congestion of the lungs, and when convalescent was advised by Sir William Broadbent to seek some high place. My sister, Mrs. Buchanan, helped me out by easy stages to Mürren, where we found good rooms waiting for us on the first floor of the hotel. It was early in July, and the vales were resplendent with gentian and many other tender mountain flowers, and all the grass was young. The fine air soon set

me right, and I was bounding up the stairs to my room, which on my arrival a few days before I had been helped to climb with the assistance of my sister and the hotel manager.

One night at the table d'hôte we noticed in front of us a very handsome woman and a pretty daughter. The mother turned out to be of the aristocracy of literature, for her father was Motley the historian, and her husband the direct descendant of Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Some years after, at her beautiful home in England, she showed me the original manuscript of *The School for Scandal*, every page of which was so scored with emendations, transpositions, and altering of sentences that I came by the familiar lines at some trouble.

While in Mürren I made the acquaintance of Ralph Moore, afterwards Sir Ralph Moore, then on sick leave from the Niger Protectorate, one of those untiring servants of the Crown who work in remote parts of the earth, making the Flag respected and loved of natives in all climes. He told me, as an unfavourable contrast to our methods, that on two occasions he was witness of German expeditions armed to the teeth, going up into the interior from their neighbouring colony, but so brutal were they to the natives that not one member of the expeditionary forces ever returned. They were exterminated to a man! We are a fool people in many respects, but our genius for pioneering and colonizing is unapproached by any other nation.

Feeling the need of a higher air than Mürren,

Moore and I started off across country over the Gemmi Pass down into the Rhone Valley, and so up to Fiesch, from whence we climbed to the Eigishorne Hotel. At the foot of the Gemmi we hired a horse, which we rode in turns to the top, neither of us being fit enough to walk all the way. This horse was a mare, with so many quaint points and characteristics, that we christened her Rosinante. We took leave of her at the top of the pass, and walked down into Leukerbad, on to which it looked as if we might have thrown a stone from the top, so sheer is the mountain-side. We looked in at the bathing-places, where we found good people, fat and lean, sitting up to their necks in warm, muddy water, which, alas! was not cloudy enough to quite obscure the various human forms divine! Most of them were eating from little floating trays, with which, when having no further use, some indulged in the pleasantry of splashing one another, to the dismay of those who had not finished their meal.

Moore was very handsome, and I noticed his advent on to the gallery some four feet above the bathers caused a flutter amongst a group of giggling girls. We were hailed by one or two men as a welcome distraction, and questioned as to whence we had come, where were we bound, were we married, and many other questions, all of which we answered with bows and smiles. There were some, however, who held a superior aloofness, only now and again giving us furtive and curious glances, which, bobbing as they were, each in front of a floating tray, added

very much to their comic appearance. We came to the conclusion that the bobbing in which they all indulged was part of the cure.

Moore and I sojourned many happy days. He was a perfect travelling companion, interested, and full of interest, always artfully contriving that I should have the best room of any two available at the hotel or the more comfortable seat in a carriage. On these two questions only did we ever fall out.

At the end of our holiday I returned to London and he to the unhealthy climate of West Africa, which conquered him in the end. After a year or so, ill health obliged him to resign his work and return to England, when he received the honour of knighthood and a post in the Colonial Office. As bad luck would have it, I only once set eyes on him again, and some time after I heard my friend had passed over to the majority while I was in America. Patriotic, brave, and gracious gentleman, accept my humble tribute.

In January 1895 I was again lent by Hare to Irving for Comyns Carr's *King Arthur*, in which I played Launcelot. The dresses and some of the scenery were designed by Burne-Jones. The part of Elaine was played by Miss Lena Ashwell, then quite a beginner, but already showing great promise of the brilliant success to which she ultimately attained.

This was the last of my three happy engagements at the Lyceum. When next I entered its portals it was as a manager, when I did my best to uphold the

traditions of the theatre that Irving's thirty years of management had made famous and unique in the history of the British drama.

Like most great men, Irving came in for a very liberal amount of whispered abuse as to his private character ; they said he was selfish, a drunkard, jealous of other actors, that he was superficial and a poseur. I knew him intimately, and I declare that he was none of these things. It is said, and I regret to find that it has been raked up against him in print since his death, that he had his speeches and discourses written for him. No doubt he was assisted with data, etc., by Bram Stoker and others, but that anyone else composed his public utterances for him is sheer nonsense. I myself have been witness on several occasions of his delivering an impromptu speech of great eloquence and charm, when the situation was such that he could have had no assistance of any kind. As instance when, previous to one of his American tours his brother actors gave him a dinner, an intimate and unique occasion, since none but actors were present. Sir John Hare, in proposing his health, made a beautiful and touching speech full of the true ring of affection and esteem. There was great applause, and our guest's health was drunk. Irving rose, and when at last the cheering had ceased, there was a long silence, and it was evident to us all that Irving was mastering his emotion, for he was highly sensitive, and felt things deeply, though his detractors would have it otherwise. Truly his heart was on his sleeve at that moment, but I believe there were

no daws present. At last he took up the MS. of his speech, and lifting it high, said, "Gentlemen, here is a carefully prepared speech which I was going to read, but after my dear friend's tribute it would be quite inadequate—it won't do," and then he threw it on the table. Taking off his glasses and rubbing his eyes, he folded his arms and with hesitancy and slowly at first, he delivered himself of eloquent, intimate, and touching words of thanks to us all and Sir John in particular. Obviously no one could have prepared that speech.

I well remember another notable instance of his power of impromptu speaking, when, after the hundredth performance of the *Merchant of Venice*, he gave a big supper-party on the Lyceum stage, which had in less than half an hour been magically transformed into a banqueting hall, with many tables spread for about a hundred and fifty guests. Lord Houghton (Monckton Mills) was in the chair, and in proposing Irving's health the unfortunate old man thought it a fitting occasion to attack Irving's interpretation of Shylock, which he did in round terms and in the facetious vein. Irving in his reply stood up to his man, and gave him with great dignity and wit such a dressing-down as completely turned the tables on the graceless and offending guest. So much for the foolish chatter about Irving not being able to make his own speeches.

I returned once more to the Garrick to play Lucas Cleve in *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, by Pinero. Mrs. Patrick Campbell, who had come into startling

prominence a little time before in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, gave a subtle and powerful performance as Mrs. Ebbsmith.

Though not so popular as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, to my mind, was in its theme far more poignant and absorbing, dealing as it did with a high-minded woman who had placed a man on a pedestal, only to find that he lacked character and spirit and came tumbling down about her feet.

In September 1895 I took, for an actor, the momentous step of going into management in conjunction with Frederic Harrison. I would gladly have remained an actor pure and simple, to be called off the ranks, so to speak, by anyone who wished to engage me. For over twenty-one years I had great good fortune in not only being in continual engagements, but in having been associated with the best managements. Calvert, Hollingshead, Neville, the Bancrofts, Miss Mary Anderson, Clayton, Hare, and Irving. I had acted with all the leading people of that time, and, though at periods being very hard worked, I had comparatively no anxieties. The very speculative and gambling nature of theatrical management was distasteful to me, and I knew that my own personal efforts as an actor would be considerably handicapped by all the extra labour and anxiety which management entails. On the other hand, several actors, younger than I, had taken up management very much earlier in their careers, and there was nothing for it but to take a theatre if I was to maintain my

place. Though it is true that an ideal theatre would be that in which the manager did not act, the fact remains that all the ambitious work, all the higher standards of the Drama have been maintained by the much-abused actor-manager from the days of Shakespeare down to our own time.

In the spring of 1895 Irving told me he was to make a long visit to America in the autumn, and I proposed to him that I should take over the Lyceum in his absence, to which he agreed, saying I should have the theatre at the rent it cost him, and that was £140 a week. There was no rack-renting spirit about Irving.

It was my good fortune to be able to engage as stage-manager my brother, Ian Robertson, lately returned from a sojourn of ten years in America, where he had been actor and stage-manager for Modjeska, Miss Julia Marloe, Laurence Barrett, and Edwin Booth, with whom he remained for many seasons.

I opened with a revival of *Romeo and Juliet*, playing the part of Romeo, Mrs. Patrick Campbell being the Juliet, and Charles Coghlan, whom I brought all the way from Prince Edward Island, playing Mercutio. The first performance was given under trying circumstances, for Mrs. Campbell was very ill and in great pain, Coghlan was paralysed with nervousness at his reappearance in London after many years of absence, and Nutcombe Gould, who played the Friar, had one arm in a sling! However, thanks to the untiring energies of my brother Ian, the play went

smoothly, though I remember my own performance was tame, lacking in fire and the buoyance of youth. Edward German wrote me some very beautiful music for this revival, completely in harmony with the great love story.

I have spoken of Coghlan and his acting elsewhere, but a curious fact was told me about the end of that fine actor which I must set down. After the run of *Romeo and Juliet*, he was engaged to play in a piece at the Shaftesbury Theatre which was not a success. He returned to America and never came back to England again. In about a year, I think, he died at Galveston. Shortly after his burial there a great storm came up from the Gulf which swept his coffin with others into the sea. The Gulf Stream bore him round Florida, up the coast about fifteen hundred miles to Prince Edward Island, and he came ashore not far from his home.

My next venture was a play by Henry Arthur Jones, called *Michael and His Lost Angel.* The piece was not well received, though I had great hopes of it, and still regard it as the finest serious play that gifted author ever wrote.

Through the kind offices of Sir Claude Phillips and Mr. Frank Schuster, I heard of François Coppee's *Pour la Couronne.* On reading it I was much impressed and, by the advice of Pinero, had it done into English by the late John Davidson, who made an admirable version of this romantic play. His rendering of some verses spoken by the slave girl Melitza exceed the original lines in beauty of rhythm. They

were delivered by Mrs. Patrick Campbell with peculiar charm, and with that rare and valuable quality in an actor, a clear articulation.

The lines are known as "Butterflies," and to this day are very popular, but few seem to be aware who was the author and the translator, and as they are generally incorrectly given, I set them down.

BUTTERFLIES.

At sixteen years she knew no care,
How could she, sweet and pure as light?
And there pursued her everywhere
Butterflies—all white.

A lover looked—she dropped her eyes,
That glowed like pansies wet with dew,
And lo! there came from out the skies,
Butterflies—all blue.

Before she guessed her heart was gone,
The tale of love was quickly told,
And all around her wheeled and shone
Butterflies—all gold.

Then he forsook her one sad morn.
She wept and sobbed, "Oh, love, come back";
There only came to her forlorn
Butterflies—all black.

Messrs. Hawes Craven, Telbin, and Ryan painted the scenery, and each excelled himself in his beautiful art. A life-sized equestrian statue was admirably modelled for the last act by the sculptor Lucchesi.

Davidson, while watching a rehearsal one day, was much exercised at the violent and windmill-like

movements of one of the actors, and said to me in his broad Scottish accent, "I suppose yon actor gets a considerable honorarium." I said he did, but that he was better suited to modern drama, and I feared that the blank verse had produced in him a sort of nervous intoxication. "Well, well," said Davidson; "now if he was doing that in Piccadilly he would get arrested."

I followed the romantic drama of *For the Crown* with Sudermann's modern realistic play *Heimat*, done into English with great skill by Louis N. Parker under the name of *Magda*, which in powerful fashion showed up the tragical results produced upon the heroine by the narrow-minded and hopelessly vulgar atmosphere of a provincial Prussian home dominated by a ridiculous old retired colonel.

During the run of *For the Crown* I was fortunate in being able to secure a delightful one-act comedy by the late Captain Robert Marshall, called *Shades of Night*. It was the author's first adventure as a playwright, and it had an immediate success. At the time he was military attaché at Pietermaritzburg, and so gratified was he by the reception of his piece and the encouragement he had received that he went back to Pietermaritzburg, and, having resigned his post, returned to London and seriously devoted himself to writing for the stage. Then followed in quick succession many brilliant comedies from his pen. Robert Marshall was of a singularly happy disposition, and his sunny nature, with his wit and humour, which were enriched by a quaint Scottish

pawkiness, made him a delightful companion. His premature death in the height of his success was a great loss to the stage, and his many devoted friends mourned him deeply.

I closed my first season of management with a revival of *The School for Scandal*, with the following cast :

Sir Peter Teazle	... William Farren, Senr.
Sir Oliver Surface	... Edward Righton.
Sir Benjamin Backbite ...	... Cyril Maude.
Charles Surface	... Fred Terry.
Joseph Surface	... J. Forbes-Robertson.
Crabtree	... Arthur Wood.
Careless	... Frank Gilmore.
Moses	... Lionel Brough.
Trip	... Norman Forbes.
Sir Harry Bumper	... Jack Robertson.
Lady Teazle	... Mrs. Patrick Campbell.
Lady Sneerwell	... Miss Henrietta Watson.
Mrs. Candour	... Miss Rose Leclercq.
Maria	... Miss Sarah Brooke.

CHAPTER XI

A REVIVAL OF *HAMLET*, AND A TOUR IN GERMANY AND HOLLAND

Grieg—Bernard Partridge—A Revival of *Macbeth* in Berlin—William of Prussia—The Empress Frederick—Maeterlinck—Gabrielle Faure—Robert Tabor—Edward, Prince of Wales—The Actor-Manager—An Enforced Holiday—Sicily—Rome—Florence—Venice—Ober-Ammergau—Miss Gertrude Elliott.

IN JULY 1897 there was again a question of my taking the Lyceum in September, but I had no money for such a venture, nor had I a play. Time went on and I was about to abandon the idea when Horatio Bottomley came to my rescue with an offer to back me, and Irving himself solved the question of the play. When talking with him on the subject of a piece, he said, "Play *Hamlet*."

"Do you really mean that?"

"Yes, and I will lend you the scenery and the properties."

Now Irving at this time was by no means too old to play the part again, a part in which he had won such "golden opinions from all sorts of people," so that I was much flattered and deeply touched at his proposal to hand over to me what certainly would have proved a profitable revival, together with his renowned theatre, at the rent it cost him, £140 a week,

and the loan of all his scenery and properties and the dresses for the subordinate characters.

On saying to Miss Terry, when still in doubt as to taking the step, "Everybody plays *Hamlet*; it has been played to death; people are sick of *Hamlet*," she very cleverly put the following question to me which eased my mind somewhat: "You would not have, say, a violinist refrain from playing some work of Beethoven's before an audience because that particular piece had been played by many other violinists?" It was mainly due to the encouragement of Irving and Miss Terry that I ventured on a revival of *Hamlet*.

When the announcements were being made I got a letter from George Bernard Shaw, whom I did not then even know by sight, beginning, "Dear Sir, I see that it is announced you are about to revive *Hamlet*. I suppose you think you are going to be very fine in the part, but let me tell you"—and then, covering four pages of foolscap, closely written, followed the kindliest, wisest advice as to the shoals and pitfalls attending such a step, and many valuable suggestions, some of which I carried out. Treasuring the letter, I stowed it away for safe keeping, but to my great regret I cannot come by its hiding-place, or I would get his permission to reproduce the whole, as it would be instructive reading for any actor about to essay the part.

On the morning after the first night, while going through some of the scenes with the company, Irving sent me word that he would like to see me. I had

lent him one of the big rooms in the Lyceum to make his preparations for his coming tour. I found him seated at a table on which were several morning papers spread before him. He banged the papers with his open hand, and said, "Well, you've done it!" I was very much played out, and had sunk into a chair on the other side of the table, but his cheering words, uttered while that wonderful smile played over his face, put new life into me. "Yes," he repeated, "you've done it, and now you must go and play Hamlet all over the world." We had a long talk. As we moved together toward the door, he opened it, then placing his hand upon my shoulder, said, Well,—"The readiness is all."

I found playing Hamlet every night exhausting. An actor should never play any great classic rôle more than three or four times a week if he wants to do himself justice. This was the custom with Phelps and Macready and Salvini. On several occasions in America I was called upon to play Hamlet nine times a week. The only remedy for this is a National Repertoire Theatre. Unfortunately, the English spirit is such that any national encouragement of the fine arts would be sternly opposed. Those, however, who know and understand how important is the Drama as an inspiring influence, watch hopefully for a better time, and there are signs in various directions that the people are slowly beginning to understand the educational value of the spoken word upon the legitimate stage.

One night Carl Ambruster, who conducted the

"DO YOU SEE YONDER CLOUD?"
J. F.-R. and J. H. Barnes.

To face p. 172.

orchestra, brought Grieg into my dressing-room, to my great gratification. With many flattering expressions, he embraced me vigorously. I could not return the embrace from the fact that he, being very short of stature, I was unable to reach him, and I found myself patting the sides of his head with both hands.

Several of the younger members of the *Hamlet* company in after years obtained high positions on the stage. Amongst these were Graham Browne, Franklyn Dyall, James Hearn, Fisher White, and Martin Harvey, whose Osric was a perfect embodiment of that affected dandy, quite the best I ever remember to have seen. The celebrated cartoonist, Bernard Partridge, then known on the stage as Bernard Gould, was the Laertes, and J. H. Barnes the Polonius, and both were admirable. My brother, Ian Robertson, added to his arduous duties of stage-manager by playing the Ghost, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell was an original and unconventional Ophelia.

Towards the end of February 1898 I took this company, with one or two exceptions, to Germany and Holland, playing in Berlin, Hanover, and Hamburg, and finishing the tour in Amsterdam. The plays I arranged to give were *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, and as Mrs. Patrick Campbell was to accompany me, I added Pinero's brilliant play, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*.

The moving of forty people and much baggage from London to Berlin was easy enough till we got to the frontier, when the petty tyrannies of the German

railway officials began to make themselves felt. However, the *verboten* atmosphere ended in being a source of great amusement to us on the otherwise tedious journey, owing to the various devices we adopted to elude such orders as we considered unreasonable. In the first place, we found that though some of us understood German, it made matters much easier if we assumed complete ignorance of that language. Mrs. Campbell with her sister, and myself with one or two others, we thought quite enough for one compartment, but on several occasions the authorities thought otherwise, and often wanted to crowd us into other compartments and divide up our party. On these occasions, much to our amusement, Mrs. Campbell would solemnly introduce me with a perfect cockney accent to any splendid official as " 'Amlet the Dine," and curiously enough this always seemed to make an impression. We concluded they thought it was some high title. By various cheerful devices we managed to get our way. On one occasion a subordinate official, having got nothing out of us in the matter of being moved to another compartment, a more gorgeous person was introduced, and standing in the middle of the carriage he made us a long speech, with spreading and folding of arms, and other signs of being much moved. The speech, with its threatening aspect, rose to a great climax. I don't remember how it came about, but I think it was a sort of general inspiration which seized us, for we received the harangue with beaming faces, much acclamation and clapping of hands and ejaculations of " wonderful

elocution," " what fire," " what pathos," " born actor," " he ought to be on the stage," etc. His jaw dropped, and he stared at us speechless, and throwing his hands above his head in an action of despair, rushed from the carriage and nearly missed his footing as the train moved slowly from the platform.

Berlin may have improved, but in 1898 it was but a showy and tawdry-looking town, with here and there some imposing though florid-looking buildings. The public statues were all quite hopeless. The general character of the architecture and interior decorations was summed up by a witty American friend of mine many years ago, who said, " You see, the Germans have established two new styles—early Pullman and late North German Lloyd ! "

Having got my company to Berlin a week before opening, that we might all be prepared for the many new conditions, I was greatly disappointed to find that I could not have possession of the stage during the day for rehearsals. I was put off with every sort of excuse and promise by the intendant of the New Opera House, previously known as Krolls Opera House. Now the intendant seemed to me a worthy and excellent man, but he had one failing, as I soon discovered. He was a very deft and complete liar. He lied about the advertisements, about when I should have the use of the stage, about the scenery, about this, that, and every sort of thing. The state of affairs reached such a climax that it drove my manager to distraction, and I had to send him back to London.

Once installed in the theatre, however, things went

smoothly, and the various heads of departments worked splendidly, and showed the greatest anxiety to do all in their power to help us. In spite of the manager's weakness, the theatre was admirably conducted, with all the latest contrivances for simplifying the moving of scenery and properties. The scenery was adequate, but there were cases where it was not, for I remember the Ghost and Hamlet appeared in a scene representing a village street after a heavy snowstorm. However, this scene gave strength to the line, "The air bites shrewdly, it is very cold!" The properties for *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, on the other hand, were all excellent.

As the New Opera House was one of the theatres belonging to the Emperor, I was allowed to employ soldiers as supers. Funny little fellows they were, very attentive and willing, though sometimes a little slow in their movements. One day at rehearsal I found my brother speeding them up by assisting them on to the stage by the collars of their tunics and the seats of their trousers. I was much alarmed, and had visions of being charged with lack of respect for the defenders of the Fatherland and forthwith being cast into the lowest dungeon beneath the castle moat, but they were all smiles, and took his drastic methods in good part.

One night, coming on to the stage before the opening of *Hamlet*, I saw the stage-manager of the theatre with his eye glued to a hole in the centre of the curtain, and all his staff standing near in expectant attitudes. I asked the meaning of it, and was told the Emperor

and his suite were coming, and that the curtain must go up the moment he was seated in his box, which was placed in the centre of the dress circle. Presently the stage-manager made a movement with his hand, and he and all his people scattered in every direction, and immediately the curtain went up.

It was the custom, and maybe is still, to allow half an hour's wait, generally after the third act, in order that the audience might take refreshment. This they did while walking round arm-in-arm in a large hall in the front of the house. I found this long wait obtained even when the Emperor was present. It was during this interval that he sent for me when he made a second visit, this time to see *Macbeth*.

I was in the midst of changing after the dagger scene into the King's robes when I was sent for. Rather than keep him waiting, I covered my half-naked form with Macbeth's royal robe, and seeking Mrs. Campbell, followed a gorgeous official to a door, on which, being opened, I found myself at the top of a stairway looking into a room crowded with tall, handsome, burly men in magnificent uniforms, from whose midst came the Emperor to the bottom of the stairs. He held out his right hand, which I took, and he led me down amongst his people, and introductions all round took place. He stood about five feet nine, and was buttoned up to the chin in a uniform. I noticed that the left wrist, which rested on his sword hilt, was very small indeed, shrunken, and there was a plain gold bangle on it. He spoke English well and fluently, with wonderfully

little foreign accent. The face was not so full as his pictures suggested, and it was colourless and somewhat lined. He spoke intelligently about acting and the Drama in general, and of *Macbeth* in particular. His manner was cordial and hearty, and with no frills. Mrs. Campbell was given a necklace and I received a scarf-pin. As we were leaving he said, "You must come again, if only to teach my people not to bellow," upon which Mrs. Campbell quickly replied, "I wish, sir, that I could bellow!"

Outside the door I found a crowd of newspaper men and others all eager to know what their Emperor had said to us. We were mum on the subject. Some of them had been rather patronizing, but that tone had entirely vanished, and there was much bowing and scraping in its place. I did not see the Emperor again. I had found this man to all appearances a courteous gentleman. Time proved him to be a poor, degraded wretch, with not a shred of honour, steeped in lies and infamy, and directly responsible for ten times more bloodshed than any aggressor mankind has ever suffered under through all history.

As the Empress Frederick did not publicly attend the theatre, we were to have given a private performance for her, but when the appointed day came she was not well enough to attend, and my stay did not permit of another performance being arranged. Before I left Berlin she sent for me. She was indeed a gracious and charming lady, with a strong look of her mother, Queen Victoria. Before I had spoken

to her five minutes she had noticed a scarf-pin I was wearing that the Queen had given me on the occasion when I played before her as a member of Sir John Hare's company at Balmoral. Her face beamed with pleasure when I said, "Yes, my Queen gave me that." The Empress impressed me as one being clouded over with an unutterable sorrow. It seemed to me the saddest face I had ever looked upon.

While in Berlin many of us were witness of the insolence of Prussian officers, and the tame, and indeed servile, way in which the civilians put up with their ridiculous airs. It came to pass that we had personal experience of their entire ignorance of the most rudimentary forms of decent behaviour.

One morning when we were rehearsing *Macbeth*, to my amazement, in the dim light of the auditorium, I caught sight of three officers with three well-dressed women seated in the stalls watching the rehearsal. I at once stopped the rehearsal, and sending for one of the company who spoke German well, asked him to go and explain to the officers that under no circumstances did I allow strangers to be present at rehearsals, and that he politely ask them to withdraw. I watched my friend deliver the message, and quite expected to see them rise and leave the theatre. No such matter. They sat quite still and never budged an inch, and their womenfolk giggled. I sent a second ambassador, my secretary, who also spoke German. No result. There the two Englishmen stood, quite still, in front of the three motionless figures in their beautifully cut uniforms. After

the lapse of a few minutes I joined my friends. I do not speak German, and the secretary told me they did not appear to understand English. Said I, "We must be prepared to take extreme measures." This I saw by the expression of my friends' faces they were quite ready to help me in doing. The situation though comic was unpleasant, particularly as we were in a royal theatre, and all the officials were royal servants. I told the secretary to explain once more my wishes, that I was the manager and I must be obeyed. The translation was given. Dead silence. Still no movement on the part of the officers. After about a couple of minutes, which to me seemed an eternity, and just as I was explaining what our method of action should be if soft words had no effect, to my great relief they rose to their feet, brought their heels together with a click, saluted me, and stalked out of the theatre, followed by their ladies. It is only fair to say that two or three days afterwards I got a letter of apology from the father of one of the men.

From Berlin we made Hanover, where there is a noble theatre, a veritable temple of the Drama, another royal house, and controlled by a Count somebody, a man of great distinction, very cultivated, and who spoke English perfectly, though he had never been in England. He was much interested in our visit, and particularly in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and her unique interpreter. The type of Sir Arthur Pinero's heroine, he said, the ordinary people of his country did not understand, as that

class of woman, he maintained, was always a very common, underbred person in Germany, and that only in England and France was a Mrs. Tanqueray possible.

He was very anxious that I should give Sudermann's *Johannis* in London. On hearing that I had not seen the play, and that we did not open in Hamburg till the Tuesday of the next week, he persuaded us to stay over, and at once gave orders for *Johannis* to be given on the following Monday night. We witnessed a very striking performance, and were all deeply impressed both with the play and the acting and the way it was put on the stage. The house was packed, though the play had been given a week or two before, and the public had only three days' notice of the change of bill. On returning to London I tried to get the play passed by the censor, but failed, nor was I any more successful in a second attempt some years afterwards.

One day during our stay in Hanover a dainty little old lady accosted me at the stage door in perfect English, so perfect indeed that I thought she was a compatriot. She told me she was an actress, but had retired and was a pensioner of the theatre and quite happy and contented. She had attended all our performances, showing great interest, and with much vivacity and charm inquired about many details of stage life in England. She was surprised when told that there was no such thing as the pensioning of actors in our country as in Germany and France.

In Hamburg we had, unfortunately, to play in a very third-rate house, due to the fact that the dates

they could give me at the leading theatre did not suit my plans. The audiences were scant and not appreciative, and we were very glad when the time came to leave for Amsterdam, where we played in the Municipal Theatre—a fine building, perfectly appointed and admirably run in every way. Here we played to crowded houses, and the greatest enthusiasm was shown. On our last performance, which was *Hamlet*, the vast audience rose and waved their hats and handkerchiefs at the end of the play. I could not help contrasting little Holland with my own country, in all its wealth and power, with not a single municipal playhouse in the land, nor any signs of there ever being such an institution.

Shortly after our return to London I produced Maeterlinck's *Pelleas and Melisande*, beautifully done into English by Professor K. W. Mackail. Maeterlinck, then quite a young man, came to London specially to witness rehearsals and a performance or two. Tall and of striking appearance, and with an amiable personality, Belgium's great poet seemed shy of much company, but blossomed out in the atmosphere of two or three congenial spirits. He wore a high black satin stock, then affected by some of the young *literati* of Paris, notably Rostand. Mrs. Patrick Campbell was the Melisande and Martin Harvey the Pelleas, I playing the jealous husband. Gabrielle Faure composed some music for the piece wonderfully suggestive of its mystical character. Two years afterwards my wife and I, passing through Paris, on our way home from our honeymoon, gave

Fauré a surprise visit in the organ loft of the Madeleine. We crept up the winding stair and found him at the organ playing the people out from a wedding. The moment he saw us his face lit up with pleasure, and the music resolved itself into what he knew was my favourite passage in *Pelleas and Melisande* as a welcome.

My next venture was a revival of *Macbeth* at the Lyceum in September 1898. Lady Macbeth was played by Mrs. Patrick Campbell, Banquo by Bernard Gould, and Macduff by the late Robert Tabor, the American actor who had won for himself a high position on the London stage. His Macduff was by far the best I have ever seen, full as it was of dignity, fire, and pathos.

This revival was attended by some ill luck, for the scenic artist who was to have painted many of the scenes fell sick in the midst of his work, and much of his scenery had to be finished by his assistants. The musical composer to whom I had given a commission many months before to write an overture and incidental music failed me at the eleventh hour. As there were no less than sixteen scenes, the absence of appropriate music for the many changes was a great loss. In spite of the quantity of scenery and heavy properties, my brother Ian had taken such pains in rehearsing the changes that the play was over by a few minutes after eleven o'clock, having begun at eight—a record yet unbeaten, I believe, for a first night's performance of this play.

During a short season at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, in conjunction with Mrs. Campbell, the

Moonlight Blossom by C. B. Fernald, and *Canaries* by Miss Constance Fletcher, were produced. The latter being a short play, I sought a one-act piece to go with it, and quite by chance came upon one of the most powerful and appealing little plays that surely was ever conceived in *The Sacrament of Judas* by Louis Tierclin. It had been given at one of the minor theatres in Paris, and was published. In my search I had picked up haphazard eight or ten one-act French pieces in a bookseller's, and found this tragedy in little, hidden away amongst a lot of risqué farces ! Louis N. Parker made an admirable translation, and this one-act piece actually drew the town for some weeks. King Edward, then Prince of Wales, came to see the play, and sent for me after the performance. He expressed a high opinion of the piece, but was curious to know if I had received any complaints from Roman Catholics as to the representation on the stage of a regular confession—a very poignant scene which occurred toward the end of the play. I told him I had not, but that, strangely enough, I had had letters from Protestants objecting to the performance on that very score.

Let me digress a moment to set down that during the nineties and the early years of nineteen hundred London was well served with dramatic fare. No less than six actor-managers of high reputation were conducting theatres : Henry Irving, John Hare, Charles Wyndham, George Alexander, Charles Hawtrey, and Herbert Tree. It may be said that not in any country, or indeed at any time in the history of

J. F.-R. AS MACBETH.

To face p. 184.

the stage, has there been such a distinguished list of actor-managers devoted to the legitimate drama. All these have been taken from us either by death or retirement within a few brief years. Arthur Pinero, Sidney Grundy, H. V. Esmond, Claude Carton, Justin Huntly M'Carthy, Robert Marshall, Bernard Shaw, and J. M. Barrie were doing some of their best work. Yet at so fruitful a period when so much was being done for the stage, there were those who chattered about the decadence of the Drama.

At present the legitimate drama would appear to be in an unsettled state. That is to say, the managers seem to have no definite policy. In the days of the actor-manager the public had a very fair idea as to the class of play they would find at any given play-house. Now all that is changed, due, I think, in a very great measure to the exorbitant rent charges. A moderate success, which in the old days a manager could hang on to, is now of no use. The manager cannot stay the course long enough to produce a new play unless he has enormous sums at his back. He disappears, and some other adventurer steps in, most likely with an entirely different class of entertainment, and all is confusion, as far as the theatre public is concerned. In short, there is no stability as there certainly was in the days of the actor-managers I have mentioned.

But the wheel must come round, and there are still one or two actor-managers who have at heart the best interests of the Drama, and more will be forthcoming when we have recovered from foreign

and domestic troubles, for the conduct of the legitimate stage must continue to be in the hands of the actor-manager if we are to make a healthy recovery. The actor who has won the approval and confidence of the public, the man or woman who has a reputation at stake, and who brings the personal note into the management of the theatre, is the one and only person who may be trusted to maintain a high standard.

After the run of *The Sacrament of Judas* I fell sick, and was advised by the doctors to take a long rest, which proved, by the way, the only one I was able to take of such duration in the whole of my career.

With the help of my brother Norman, I went by easy stages to Sicily, that land of sun and romance. Having seen something of Naples, we made Palermo, and rejoiced in the splendour of her wonderful bay, which exceeds in beauty that of Naples, from whence we had come by boat. In a short time strength came back to me, and we were able to get some idea of the riches of that fascinating city. We paid our homage to the noble Byzantine pile which crowns the hill of Mont Reale, and that still more wonderful shrine, the Royal Chapel in Palermo, the most perfect example of Byzantine art in the world. As we entered its portals, and in the dim light became conscious of all its mystery and beauty, we found ourselves simultaneously uttering an "Oh!" of wonder and delight. We could make no further comment, an awed silence fell upon us, and only, I believe, did we humbly thank God in our hearts for the eyes to behold and the spirit to appreciate.

The Greeks, the Romans, the Moors, and the Normans all have left their mark upon the city, so that it teems with beautiful records of their influence. The picturesque water-towers of the Moors survive, and prove to this day serviceable for the distribution of water through the town so comfortably seated in the Concha Dora.

About an hour's drive from Palermo there are the ruins of a Roman town high on the hill-side overlooking the vast bay west of the Concha Dora. Saluntum is its name, not, it seems, generally known to tourists. It is a veritable Pompeii in little, not only as regards its actual size, but as to its streets and buildings, which are all diminutive, a little temple or two, a little forum, a little theatre—all in little streets which are cut out of the side of the hill, one above the other in straight rows, with narrow steps giving access from one street to another. Sitting on a broken wall in the midst of this fascinating Lilliputian town, Hamilton Aidé and I, with one or two congenial spirits, ate sandwiches and drank the Whitaker brothers' good wine.

Norman was called to England, but before he left we had become acquainted with the Whitaker family, and all sorts of pleasant jaunts were devised for us. I was soon rescued from the loneliness of an hotel, for Mr. Joshua Whitaker wafted me from a not very comfortable hotel to his beautiful Venetian Gothic house in the Via Bara, where I was installed in two sunny and sumptuous rooms, and waited on hand and foot by a Sicilian, solemn and immaculate. To

the care of my kind hosts I owed my quick recovery to normal health, for they held me, all too willing a prisoner, for six weeks, till the spring was sufficiently advanced for me to venture to Italy.

One or two of the Greek remains in Sicily are not easy to get at, or were not in those days, but by the advice and help of my friends I was able to visit Selinunti and Segesta, the largest and most complete of the Sicilian temples, remote on a hill in a wild country, and a long drive from the station. For this expedition I was given an ex-brigand for a guide on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, I suppose, for it was still possible to be kidnapped. I found him a most amiable and agreeable person, and very interested in my attempt to carry on a talk with the help of a conversation book. When he met me at the station, he was armed with a loaded gun, which he threw on the back seat of the carriage as we drove off. When we reached the temple, I managed to gather from him that he was surprised that I should have come all the way from Palermo to see " the old stones," but he showed a keen interest in the tempting " piece " with which my hosts had provided me, when he found we were to share the provender, which we did seated on the steps of the impressive temple. We then descended into the valley to mount a hill on the top of which was the theatre, artfully placed so that when seated in the auditorium there was a view above the stage of surpassing beauty.

On the way back to the station my friend stopped the carriage at the gate of one of the numerous towns

in Sicily which are perched upon hill-tops and are thickly populated, some of them having as many as ten thousand inhabitants. He got out, taking his gun with him, and saying something to the driver disappeared into the town. The carriage then moved on at a gentle pace right round the walls of the town to another gate, where we drew up and waited about twenty minutes. After a little I began to regard the stooping back of the old coachman with suspicion, and made up my mind that his face as he turned was villainous, which, as a matter of fact, was not the case. I was wondering where on earth would come a ransom if I were kidnapped, when my friend appeared at the gate alone. Having worked myself up to expecting him to be attended by a party of cut-throats, I was much relieved. The place turned out to be his native town, and I gathered he had been to see " his sisters, and his cousins, and his uncles and his aunts ! "

The Maffia, of whom my protector had been a member, showed great ingenuity in holding up their victims, choosing only those they were sure could provide a good ransom when they had got them into the remote fastnesses of the island. I think only one Englishman was ever held up by them, and he was Mr. Rose, a nephew of Arthur Sketchley, whom I had known well. Mr. Rose was held prisoner some weeks, always, he told me, kindly treated, but never being able to change his clothes, and being moved from one hiding-place to another during the night and sharing with them considerable hardship. When at last the ransom was paid, they took him to

within three or four miles of a station, showed him his way, told him he had been a good boy and that they loved him, and so bade him farewell with tears and embraces.

Before leaving Sicily I saw something of the brigands' country and remote places to which they were able to withdraw with their victims. An expedition was arranged by Mr. Whitaker for his nephew to visit some property of his that he had not seen, and which lay in the very heart of Sicily, and I was one of the party. We took train to Marianapoli, where we were met by some six or eight of young Whitaker's tenant farmers, fine types of humanity, picturesque and imposing in their long black coats and slouch hats, armed to the teeth and well mounted. They had brought extra horses for our party. In single file we rode for near upon three hours, through a very wild and mountainous country, forbidding in aspect, as it was treeless and with little grass, nor do I remember passing a house or shed of any kind once we were clear of Marianapoli. While on a narrow, rocky path, precipitous on either hand, the leader of our party brought down a hawk with his fowling-piece without drawing rein. Our destination was a farm-house, part of an ancient castle, much of which was intact, and bravely perched upon a great hill-top, with a view of endless mountain chains far and near on every hand. It was early April, and the air was soft, though with an invigorating tang. I thought of Scotland and King Duncan's words :

This castle hath a pleasant seat, the air nimbly and sweetly recommends itself unto our gentle senses.

We rode under the arched and massive gateway flanked by towers, and the cavalcade clattered into a great courtyard, where we dismounted to take a meal in a hall of fine and ample proportions. The farmers had provided huge round loaves of most excellent bread, about two feet in diameter, some milk and fruit. We had brought our " pieces " in the shape of sandwiches, but gathering from the interpreter that our hosts very rarely saw meat, we confined ourselves to the bread and fruit, and gave the sandwiches to the farmers, which they greatly appreciated.

After a rest, and cigarettes all round, we remounted, when I insisted that young Whitaker should make a speech to his tenants, which after some pressure he did, turning the colour of a peony meanwhile, and the interpreter followed. We then wound our intricate and rugged way back to the station, which time it was dark. I was glad that night to retire early to my comfortable bed under the hospitable roof of the Whitakers.

While I was in Palermo, an admirable company, headed by Maggi, a gifted actor with a beautiful voice, gave a series of performances of various plays. Amongst them was *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and though Maggi could not make one forget the inimitable Coquelin, the performance was full of beauty and pathos, and at one or two points bettered the original. The same company played a few nights afterwards in a modern Italian comedy with great spirit and finesse, untheatrical in method, and faithful to nature. The Italian is a born actor, and I am inclined to place

him at the head of all nationalities as regards the player's art.

Having come across two friends at Syracuse, we journeyed to Taormina, and thence to Naples by way of Messina, and revisited Pompeii, where the authorities allowed me to remove some of the dusty debris with my own hands from the side of a brilliantly painted interior wall that was being excavated. It was an uncanny and awe-inspiring sensation, gazing upon colour and design that had not been looked on for over eighteen hundred years. It would need the pen of a Max Beerbohm to handle with imaginative phrase all the thoughts that crowded upon one at such a curious and thrilling moment. What were the people like who last gazed upon the walls of this beautiful home? Was the head of the house some retired merchant profiteer, or some statesman, poet, or painter, come lately from the capital for a few days' rest with his family? Perhaps at the door of this very palace stood Poynter's fearless Roman sentinel.

After a very careful examination of these enchanting ruins, one comes away with the impression that many comforts and conveniences for the people at large were better considered, better carried out, and better regulated than they are now in this boasting twentieth century. Barring the doubtful advantages of quick transit, the telegraph, the telephone, submarines, and aeroplanes, there would appear to have been nothing wanting to make existence ideal in Pompeii.

I do not know if it has been generally observed, but shop fronts in the poorer districts of Naples are in plan and size exactly the same as those of the Pompeiian shopkeepers. My friends and I then enjoyed the splendours of Pæstum, stayed at Amalfi, and drove thence by that wonderful coast road to Sorrento.

After many years of waiting and longing, Rome at last! I was there three weeks only, not half the time needful to get familiar with all her wealth of beauty. A sense of disappointment came upon me for the first day or so, and truth to tell, being so steeped in the Grecian remains of Sicily, the monuments of the younger civilization seemed in comparison things of yesterday. But soon the full tide of all the city could give—the Roman, the ecclesiastical, and the mediæval splendours of the Eternal City—swept me off my feet, and left me bewildered in the contemplation of her endless riches.

Being very familiar with all the ceremonies of the Church of Rome in my youth, and much impressed with the dignified and sincere way in which they were carried out, I was pained to find in Rome and Southern Italy generally a very different atmosphere in this regard. The priests appeared to me to lack the reverence and respect I had been accustomed to in Normandy and England. The various remnants of obvious paganism in their ritual ceremonies, too, were a jarring note. I once asked a cardinal why these many extraneous side-dishes, so to speak, such as the Black Bambino, etc., need be, and why Rome

did not set an example by purifying the Church of such matters. His answer was that the people liked them. I remember an amusing instance of the happy-go-lucky ways of the Roman priesthood. It was on an occasion when I chanced to catch sight of a well-dressed woman being confessed. The priest while hearing her confession saw a friend, another priest, passing, and hailed him in cheerful tone. The worthy men then had a chat, exchanging pinches of snuff, and meanwhile the unfortunate woman knelt there waiting! Very impressive, however, was a solemn procession I witnessed with Pope Leo XIII on his Sedia Gestatoria, supported by his guard of Roman princes, and the vast multitudes waving their hats and handkerchiefs, crying, "Evviva il Papa Re." I had had a special ticket of entrance given me, and the people in my neighbourhood appeared to be highly respectable. Therefore, when the enthusiasm had died down, I was much surprised to hear one near me cry, "Somebody's got my watch!"

From Rome I made Florence, where I lingered many days in loving reverence. To him who is able to receive the message that Florence can give, what a spiritual elevation is his! The tenderness of her meets one at every turn. She is the lovely girl, the exquisite princess, surely, of all the cities of the world. She seems to wear her splendid adornment with such ease, simplicity, and grace, and with such dignity. Always she seems to be uttering a continuous prayer that distracted humanity may follow a clean and godly life. Such are the ennobling and

elevating influences of supreme art in any of its phases. They foster and nurse the spirit and mind of man to a truly religious temperament, and deliver him for the time being at least from the brutalizing influences of modern civilization.

Venice, Queen of the Adriatic ! Queen, indeed, though of a somewhat gloomy and austere beauty, she seems so very old and worn. Her ink-like waters whose sluggish tides lap her neglected walls, inspire a sort of sweet melancholy. Would it shock the spirits of Whistler and Canoletti to wish that millions might be given her to stop decay and wisely restore her noble monuments and palaces, lest they melt into the Adriatic ?

Three weeks after I had climbed to the top of the Campanile, it fell. It had no great architectural merit, and the considerable cost of its rebuilding was an amount that would have been far better spent in the upkeep of the Doge's Palace and St. Mark's. The view from the other end of the piazza of these two beautiful monuments was greatly improved by the fall of the Campanile, which I realized on a second visit. Much of the palace could be seen, and St. Mark's took its proper and dominating place in the piazza instead of being blanketed by the great tower, and I, for one, much regret that it was ever rebuilt.

Of all the splendid art treasures of Venice, there are two that remain dominant in my mind from their impressiveness. These are Verrocchio's incomparable " Colleoni," and that stupendous masterpiece " The Crucifixion," by Tintoretto.

It chanced that the year I was in Italy the peasants of Ober-Ammergau were giving their Passion Play, and being anxious to witness a performance I took the long journey from Venice for that purpose. On the way, the train climbed for an hour or so through a gorge in which was a roaring torrent. In the same compartment with me were four people, evidently husbands and wives. They talked of everything under the sun except of the wonderful scenery through which we were passing, and of which they took no heed. They, however, expressed considerable annoyance at the length of our upward journey. At last one of the males said authoritatively, "We are going down now," upon which his wife replied with a modest, doubting inflection :

"Well, dear, the torrent is still going the other way."

"I can't help that ; we are going down."

The Ober-Ammergau performance was very impressive and moving. Had the play been interpreted by actors highly gifted in their art, I am persuaded the thing would have been too poignant to witness. Evidently the company was well trained by a regular metropolitan stage-manager. The performance would have been far more interesting had the peasants been left to their own devices, as in the days of its inception must have been the case. One looked for a primitive atmosphere, which was lacking, otherwise the interpretation was dignified and sincere, nor was there in any respect a lack of taste in evidence.

During the performance I was troubled by a large

hat on the head of a lady in front of me. I begged her to remove it, saying I had come a long way to witness the play. She declined to do so with some asperity. After a little while she turned and said, " If you will tell me when there is any part of the performance you particularly want to see, I will sit on one side." In proposing this touching concession, she quite ignored the fact, poor dear ! that she would shut out the view of the stage from one of my neighbours. I told her that possibly it might appear unreasonable in me, but that I wished to see the whole of the performance. This I managed to do later by getting my seat changed.

Luck seems never to have been with me in the matter of the behaviour of my neighbours in public places. I recall a case at Bayreuth during the performance of *Tannhäuser*, when a young woman next me kept steadily dropping things from her lap about every five minutes or so, and I became distractedly busy picking them up. Finally I let them lie where they had fallen, and much to my relief so did she.

The visit to Ober-Ammergau brought my long holiday to an end, and after staying a day or two in Paris I returned to London to rehearse my company, which my brother had gathered together for an autumn tour.

While I was in Palermo he sent me a list of those who were prepared to join the company as the leading lady. Of this number was Miss Gertrude Elliott. I had never seen her act, and had met her once only at a supper-party given by my friend, Captain Robert

Marshall, in whose play, *The Royal Family*, she was then acting with very great success.

Out of the list I chose one whose acting I knew, and who had had experience in Shakespearian parts, which I gathered Miss Elliott had not, and I wrote my brother the name of the lady I had decided on. Three or four days after the letter was posted, while walking in the streets of Palermo, I found myself in a telegraph office sending a message to this effect : " If not too late engage Miss Elliott." The question was, which would win, the letter or the telegram. As the hours and days passed, I found that I was not taking the matter with that philosophic calm proper in an actor-manager, and the fact disturbed me. Suddenly to want a certain young lady with whom I was but very slightly acquainted, to be of my company seemed unreasonable under the circumstances. What was the meaning of it ? At long last my brother telegraphed : " Have engaged Miss Elliott." A prosaic message enough, but it was to be the prelude of nothing less to me than a supremely happy life.

During the autumn tour of 1900 I produced *The Devil's Disciple*, a stimulating and delightful play which had a considerable success. The character of Dick Dudgeon appealed to me, but Bernard Shaw never liked me in the part, and frankly told me so in a most amusing letter, wherein he said I had cost him one and ninepence to witness the performance from the gallery of the Coronet Theatre. A shilling for his seat, twopence for the playbill, and sevenpence for his fare on the underground railway ! It is only

just to state, however, that at least he had the satisfaction of seeing a packed house. For this tour the distinguished actor, Leon Quartermain, rejoined my company, and remained with me for five years.

With *The Devil's Disciple* I gave Jules Renard's touching and beautiful little picture of French provincial life, called *Carrots*, done into English by Arthur Sutro. My new leading lady's performance of the persecuted boy was to the life in every gesture, tone, and look ; Miss Kate Bishop, as the mother, was a perfect embodiment of that hard, soulless creature. Only three one-act plays as manager did I produce, but they were all gems of their kind : *The Shades of Night*, *The Sacrament of Judas*, and *Carrots*, all worthy to be seen again. Some few years afterwards we gave *Carrots* at a command performance before King Edward and the Queen at Sandringham.

Quite apart from the honour, it was always a keen pleasure to play before the King and Queen, who invariably set an example to their subjects as to behaviour in a theatre. King George and the Queen and their family are models in this respect. During the last few years the manners of those in the stalls and boxes have somewhat improved, but the vulgarity and insolence displayed in the latter part of the nineteenth century, almost nightly, was intolerable. The only possible cure, which did not always succeed, however, was to stop the action of the play until the chattering had ceased. This I have had to do many times. When playing *The Sacrament of Judas*, so disturbed were we all, both actors and audience, by

late comers, that I was obliged to have the doors guarded at the rise of the curtain, and not to permit anyone to pass until the piece was over.

There was one occasion when an interrupting voice had a very comic effect. During the progress of the latter part of *The Profligate*, one from the stalls said in a bibulous, surprised, and plaintive tone, "My God, I've seen this play before!"

Compton, that distinguished comedian of the old Haymarket in Buckstone's days, and father of the popular Edward Compton and Mrs. R. C. Carton, put to some confusion a stage box full of talkers by walking down to the box and addressing the occupants thus: "Ladies and gentlemen, I fear we interrupt your conversation!" There were two boxes in the old Haymarket which were actually on the stage.

During the whole course of my long experience of American audiences, I have but once been inconvenienced by this sort of thing, and that was while playing *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, when the absorbed interest of the whole audience appeared to afford a well-known woman of fashion and her party considerable mirth, to which they abandoned themselves with undisguised guffaws. They were quite unmoved by the protests of the outraged audience, and eventually withdrew from the box laughing and chattering, all down the aisle, and we were once more allowed to go on with the play in peace and quiet. This blatant and cold-blooded want of consideration on the part of London audiences strangely enough came only from the boxes and stalls, never from any

other part of the house, except perhaps now and then from the gallery when some remark has been provoked by the naughtiness of the villain, showing at least an interest in the proceedings.

At representations of legitimate drama the audience has its duty to itself and to the actor, quite as much as the actor has his evident duty to his audience. This would often appear to be lost sight of. The actor is being continually reminded of his obligations from various quarters, but it is seldom pointed out that an audience must also render service, as it were, by not talking, coughing, and staggering into or out of their seats in concert or playhouse while the entertainment is toward. The audience is part and parcel, so to speak, of the play or the sonata, and unless they are prepared to pay attention, and to give themselves up to the illusion, there is no play, no music. Incidentally, the plague of coughing is most infectious. One loud cough will start the whole house. Two or three words, which may be the key-words of a whole scene, are drowned by this one cough ; at once the interest is distracted, because the thread is lost, and more coughing follows. I remember a celebrated preacher giving a practical illustration to his listeners in this matter. He said : "I notice the congregation has taken to much coughing of late. Now as my church is always crowded, I must conclude that the majority of you come to hear what I have to say, but you can't hear me if you cough." Then after a pause, and pointing dramatically at the congregation, he thundered, "You're not coughing now!"

The late Lord Leighton once said to me, "I always go alone to see a play or to hear music, as I don't want to talk, or to be talked to." I recall, by the way, that never could I induce him to accept a free seat. He was the antithesis of a well-off, very sanctimonious lady I once knew, who would never pay to see a play on principle, but always went with alacrity if given a box!

At the end of the tour Miss Gertrude Elliott did me the honour of becoming my wife. We were married on December 22, 1900, at a little church in the north-west of London, my father and mother, a few of my relations, and some members of my company being present.

We were married by a saintly man, the late Canon Borradaile, my dear friend of thirty years' standing. He was more nervous at the ceremony than were even the bride and bridegroom, and made a slip in the words of the service which the bride saved with a brave presence of mind.

After the wedding breakfast, which took place at Mr. and Mrs. Ryley's house, with whom my wife had been staying, we started for Biarritz, and began the journey by nearly missing the boat train for Folkestone!

On our return to London we were plunged into the preparation of several plays for a spring tour, my brother Ian having gathered the company together during my absence.

On September 22, 1901, our eldest daughter came into the world. I was playing in Edinburgh, and

Photo by] [*Sarony.*

MISS GERTRUDE ELLIOTT AS OPHELIA.

To face p. 202.

full of anxiety I took the Saturday night train to London. It was my good fortune to find a travelling companion in my friend Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and before turning in, he, considerate man, sought to distract me from my cares with many interesting facts about the musical world. I remember that he pointed out that of the then prominent British composers, not any were English, but that all were either of Scottish, Welsh, or Irish parentage. That Grieg was of Scottish descent, his father's name being Greg.

On reaching London, my mother met me at the door with, " All is well." There was a little note of disappointment in her voice, as she told me my wife had been obliged to stay with her sister at " Jackwood," on Shooter's Hill. It had been settled that my wife should have been at our house, but the event came about sooner than was expected. To " Jackwood " I hurried, to find that both were well, and I was permitted to hold in my arms our firstborn.

Early on Monday I had to start for Glasgow, where I was due to play Hamlet that night. The train was late, but by keeping the curtain down for a few minutes I was ready and able to make my first appearance on the stage as the father of Maxine Frances Mary. I recall my brother Ian greeting me with the remark, " Well, I suppose you will tell me it is the most wonderful infant that was ever seen ? " Said I, " There's no doubt about it ! "

It was in January 1902 that we first gave *Mice and Men* at the Lyric Theatre. We played it in Man-

chester with so much success that I felt emboldened to venture London, and nothing could have been more cordial than its reception. Peggy, played to admiration by my wife, took the hearts of the public, and we had a very long and prosperous run with Madeleine Lucette Ryley's graceful and ingenious play.

After I had secured the rights of *Mice and Men*, and some days before the production, a one-act play was sent me by a friend almost identical in plot and treatment. In some alarm I wrote at once to my friend, explaining the extraordinary coincidence.

Early in my managerial career often would come "behind" that ethereal and inspiring creature Canon Ainger, and bring with him some kindred spirit. The Master of the Temple, with his clean-cut features and snow-white hair, was to me, and surely to all who knew him, a sort of divinity, so Christ-like was he in character and temperament. He was ever heart and soul for the drama, and very much alive to its uplifting power. From his lips I heard for the first time the well-known story of Charles Lamb's question to the porter at a country station who was carrying a huge hare. "Excuse me, porter, but is that your own hare or a wig?"

A very different type of divine was Henry Ward Beecher. He was, however, a great orator. I have heard him speak for well over an hour, but such was his eloquence and charm, that it seemed much less than half that time. I have sat under many of the silver-tongued, but Henry Ward Beecher was, to my mind, at the head and front of them all.

CHAPTER XII

SOME ACCOUNT OF ACTORS AND DRAMATISTS IN 1874

Rossetti and T. W. Robertson—Two Lovers and a Strange Coincidence —Tom Taylor and Charles Reade at Loggerheads—One Ghost and Two Hamlets—Robert Browning and the Phonograph.

HAVING ARRIVED SO FAR on my life's journey, I now propose to take a brief and general review of the British drama, and its interpreters at the time of my becoming an actor, in 1874.

The leading dramatic authors of the early seventies were Westland Marston, Charles Reade, Frank Burnand, Herman Merrivale, James Albery, H. J. Byron, W. S. Gilbert, Tom Robertson, Tom Taylor, and W. G. Wills. The last four men were by far the most prolific and successful. Byron and Robertson I never met, alas ! but with all the others I was on intimate terms.

The most notable plays, those that held the stage for a considerable time and bore the test of revival, were *Pygmalion and Galatea* by Gilbert, Albery's *Two Roses*, *Clancarty* by Tom Taylor, *Charles the First* by W. G. Wills, and Robertson's *Caste*.

I have a vivid recollection of Robertson's first play, *Society*, and the freshness and charm of it, interpreted so admirably by the Bancrofts and their com-

pany, of whom John Hare and the handsome Harry Montague were members.

Here is a rather interesting link between painting and the drama, not, I think, generally known. Dante Rossetti told me that Robertson, with diffidence and anxiety, had read *Society* to him, with which he was delighted, and urged Robertson to have produced as soon as possible, saying he was sure it would prove a great attraction. There was in those days a facetious and "highbrow" sort of worthy who had invented the term "the tea-cup and saucer comedy," in contemptuous reference to Robertson's plays. To that person, if he be still alive, and to those who took up the catch-phrase and played on it *ad nauseam*, I commend the verdict of the great poet and painter. Robertson had many imitators, but they none of them approached him in his originality, truthfulness, and delicacy of touch.

Westland Marston had written for Macready, and though he could hardly, perhaps, be counted as a contemporary of the others, as he was much their senior, was nevertheless keenly in touch with the theatre world, and was looked upon as the doyen of the dramatists. Many interesting people frequented his house. Of them were the Irish poet Arthur O'Shaughnessy, and his friend Payne, author of a very complete and scholarly translation of the *Arabian Nights*; Herman Vezin, a bright and dapper little man, then in the height of his popularity; Mrs. Lyn Linton the novelist, whose articles in the *Saturday Review*, headed "The Girl of the Period,"

caused considerable sensation at the time; Miss Mathilde Blind, author of a life of Mazzini; W. G. Wills, who divided his energies between play-writing and painting. One of his pictures, by the way, reached the highest merit, as the following incident will show. Several painters were admiring his "Laertes and Ophelia" on the varnishing day at the Royal Academy—all thought it was by Watts, and congratulated him, upon which he said, "No, it is not by me; I wish to Heaven it were."

Always at Mrs. Marston's gatherings, in the corner of the room by the door, sat a young man quite blind, who slightly rose from his chair when the visitors, on entering, greeted him affectionately. He was the son of the house, Philip Bourke Marston, the poet who, had he lived, must have reached to fame. He was engaged to a Miss Nisbet, one of the most beautiful young women it was ever my privilege to look upon. But all too soon, as far as this world goes, came their separation. For her health's sake she had been taken to a seaside place in Normandy, he to the south coast of England. The relations of each afterwards discovered that both Marston and Miss Nisbet, a few hours before the girl's death, had risen from where they were seated, she on the shores of France, he on the cliffs of England, and had called to one another, with extended arms! Far away memories crowd in upon me, and I wander from my theme.

Tom Taylor, one of the most prolific writers for the stage at that time, was an untiring worker. He

held a post in the Civil Service, was art critic fo *The Times*, contributed to many periodicals, including *Punch*, of which he became editor, and held the post for many years up to the day of his death. He loved the stage and all to do with it. His *Ticket of Leave Man* was an effective drama, and held the boards at constant revivals over a long period. He and Charles Reade were bosom friends, and did much work for the stage in common, notably *Masks and Faces*. Many kindnesses did Tom Taylor show me and mine, and many another struggling actor had help at his hands.

At a rehearsal for a revival of *Masks and Faces*, in which I was concerned, Taylor and Reade were on the stage watching. Taylor was giving some directions to the actors in a particular scene, when Reade interrupted, saying, " My dear Tom, you must allow me to direct this scene ; as you remember, it was I who wrote it." To which Taylor replied, " Nothing of the sort, my dear Charles ; your memory is sadly at fault ; the scene was written by me," and then these two dear men fell to hammer and tongs, much to the amusement of the players. Eventually Reade put on a martyr face with, " Well, have it your own way, Tom," and the rehearsal was resumed.

Mrs. Tom Taylor was an accomplished musician, and played the piano to admiration. Her face was rather austere, but when she was at the piano it melted and became quite beautiful. She told me that when a little child, while she was staying with a relation in Paris, her aunt, I think it was, said to her

one day, "We are going to see a friend of mine who loves flowers. You shall take him some." Having bought a big nosegay, they went to a house in a modest part of the town, climbed a long way up a gaunt staircase, and rang at a bell, which was presently answered by a pale, sad-looking man in sombre garment, who welcomed them into a large white room with scarce anything in it but a profusion of flowers, a chair or two, a desk, and a piano. The child presented her flowers, and then her aunt said, "Now I want you please to play something for my niece, that she may cherish the privilege all her life." He played, and the child was carried away into another world by the beauty of it. The man was Chopin.

The Two Roses remains strongly in my mind from a remarkable performance by Irving. He was slowly coming to fame, and had been for some time before a member of a strong company at the Queen's Theatre in Long Acre, which included Charles Wyndham and Miss Ellen Terry, who had not yet retired from the stage, which she did later to become Mrs. G. F. Watts. Some time after, Bateman, an American manager, took the Lyceum, and engaged Irving to support his daughter. Bateman, soon realizing Irving's magnetism, made him the leading attraction of his theatre.

In connection with Irving's first great success as a star, John Millard, the father of the some time distinguished actress of that name, told me the following incident. One night he chanced upon Irving in the underground railway, and finding him in

anxious mood and nervous, he asked him the reason, when Irving told him he was about to undergo the ordeal of a first night at the Lyceum in a piece from Erckmann and Chatrian's *Polish Jew*, which the adapter, Leopold Lewis, had christened *The Bells*. At the time Irving was receiving the magnificent honorarium of fourteen pounds a week ! Nowadays an actor in a like position would get at least a hundred, if not more.

The men and women prominent in the theatre of my early days were highly gifted and numerous. To name some of the interpreters of legitimate drama, there were Phelps, Charles Mathews, Barry Sullivan, Dillon, J. L. Toole, Alfred Wigan, Mrs. Stirling, Compton, Buckstone, Sothern, Dion Boucicault, Benjamin Webster, William Farren, Miss Adelaide Neilson, Walter Montgomery, Fechter, Henry Neville, Miss Kate Terry, Miss Ellen Terry, John Clayton, Charles Coghlan, Mrs. John Wood, Miss Carlotta le Clercq and her sister Rose, Mrs. Alfred Mellon and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Wigan, Shiel Barry, John Ryder, John Hare, Squire Bancroft and Miss Marie Wilton, Harry Montague, David James, George Honey, Sam Emery, the father of Miss Winifred Emery, W. H. Kendal and Miss Madge Robertson, Mr. and Mrs. Herman Vezin, Miss Ada Cavendish, Miss Herbert and Miss Lydia Foote, Charles Wyndham, James Fernandez, Mrs. Gaston Murray, Lionel Brough, and Henry Irving : all these I have seen perform, and with twenty-three of them it has been my privilege to act. Surely an imposing list, and hardly to be

equalled in number or quality at the present time. Of these brilliant actors, only three are left, Bancroft, Miss Terry and Mrs. Kendal.

To touch upon the acting of these gifted players would take a volume in itself, but it may be safely said that many of them have never been replaced. Perhaps the dominant feature of their excellence lay in their strong personalities. They had the great advantage of having been recruited for London from the provincial stock companies, and although the education of the stage was by this means of a rough and ready nature, at least it engendered confidence and self-reliance. I would not extol the old method at the expense of the new, at the same time the tendency of the nowaday "producer," as he is called, is apt to stifle individuality and to school the actors into one stereotyped pattern. Now, as it seems to me, the actor who has been properly prepared for the stage should, in generous measure, be allowed to seek out his own salvation. If he fail in doing this, all the coaching in the world will advance him but little in his art, and indeed may wean from him self-help in developing his character and personality as an actor, and leave him feebly relying on the nursing and cramming of some producer who, as likely as not, may be leading him in the wrong direction.

One cannot but regret the many highly gifted men with the true dramatic *flair* who are absorbed by the lighter forms of entertainment. These in the old days found comparatively little outlet for their genius except on the legitimate stage, and so

were saved to it. The amount of talent among British performers in general is prodigious, but unfortunately it is dissipated in various directions, and the rivalry of the musical and variety theatres and kindred entertainments to the Drama is only detrimental in so far as they rob her of many who might otherwise have been her votaries.

There were definite signs fifty years ago, that the stage was on the eve of a great renaissance, if indeed it had not already arrived. The prejudice against it was dying out, though dying hard. The "unco guid," and other worthy folk, were beginning to realize that because a young man or a young woman took to the stage as a calling, he or she was not thereby utterly damned! The tone of the theatre generally was higher than before, and the rank and file were being leavened by cultivated and earnest students. Gilbert was writing his fantastic and humorous comedies for the Haymarket, and Robertson was in full swing at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. Both of them brought new blood, and were pioneers and epoch makers in the dramatic world. It was a period of transition, and certain conventionalities in play-writing and their interpretation were being broken down.

I have a distinct remembrance of my first introduction to the Haymarket company under Buckstone. On looking round the green room at the seated members assembled for the reading of Tom Taylor's piece, *Anne Boleyn*, I discovered that the established males of the company were all quite bald,

with the exception of the handsome Quaker, Henry Howe. The new-comers at the reading were Miss Adelaide Neilson, Harry Conway and Kyrle Bellew, both youths, Charles Harcourt and Arthur Cecil. I do not remember any young man, then or since, so strikingly handsome as Conway. He was rather short, but his head was well set on his straight shoulders, and his features were clean cut and regular as an antique cameo. Kyrle Bellew, who afterwards won distinction in America, was then known as Harold Kyrle, a comely, slim, and graceful youth, the son of the once fashionable preacher, J. M. Bellew, a man of dignified and striking appearance. He was an admirable reader, with histrionic leanings, and would have made a fine actor.

I recall his giving readings of *Hamlet* from the orchestra before a stage on which actors in dumb show went through the scenes as he read them. During the scene between Hamlet and the Ghost, Bellew was evidently unable to resist turning from his desk to address the ghost on the stage. Up went his arms in appeal, and up went the actor's arms. " Angels and ministers of grace defend us ! " There were two Hamlets in the field !

At the reading of *Anne Boleyn* were not only the company, but the permanent ballet mistress, as there was to be a dance in the play, the stage carpenter, the musical conductor, and the scenic artist. This was my last experience of an old custom, that of having everyone connected with the production of the play present at the reading.

Here I should like to set down a few words about my intimates in the early eighties. They were Arthur Cecil, Conway, Henry Kemble, Charles Brookfield, and Corney Grain. We forgathered at all sorts of times and places. Always full of the joy of life, their quips and japes, could I but recall them, would fill many pages of my rambling notes. Kemble was known amongst us as "The Beetle," because of his rotund and solid figure. It was told of him that on one occasion, being pressed for his income tax when not quite convenient, he addressed the tax collector in measured tones thus: "Sir, I now pay you this exorbitant charge, but I must ask you to explain to Her Majesty that she must not in future look upon me as a source of income."

Brookfield had, like Kemble, a keen and often caustic wit, somewhat biting at times, though kinder men never breathed, full as they were of good will and secret charity. Here is an instance of Brookfield's unsparing tongue. There is a certain small well-frequented club in London, then held in one big room up two flights of stairs. One night into this room came clashing a volunteer officer in uniform, spurs and sword and everything on, who threw himself into a chair, remarking in a loud voice that he had had a very heavy field day. Brookfield, coming in shortly after, joined some young Guardsmen at the other end of the room, and noticing the then unheard-of sight of a man in uniform in a club, said in a stage whisper, "Whose is that charger I see tethered in the lavatory?"

There was at one of Brookfield's clubs a member who was given to airing his atheistical views rather too freely for the feelings of his fellow-members. In a letter to Joseph Knight, in which Brookfield touched upon the subject, he wrote the following :

> We've heard in language highly spiced,
> That Crow does not believe in Christ,
> But what we're more concerned to know,
> Is whether Christ believes in Crow.

Carlo Pellegrini, that famous caricaturist "Ape," was often of our party. One night when Cecil was entertaining us at the Arts Club, a dish of spaghetti was set on the table just as Pellegrini chanced to come in. Cecil, knowing "Pelican's" love for his native dish, bade him join us, and sent him a quantity of spaghetti heaped high on his plate. He contemplated the mass before him for a moment, and then cried reproachfully in his broken English, "Oh, what a stinge!" One thing Pellegrini hated above all, and that was to leave London even for a few hours, and as for a few days in the country, such an event was looked upon as martyrdom. Once, on returning from a short visit he had been pressed to make, as the train ran into the murky atmosphere of the town, he sighed with much relief, "Ah! maintenant je respire!"

Corney Grain never left the entertainment platform for the regular stage, as did his old friend Arthur Cecil, but he had the temperament for it, as he showed when he played with the German Reeds in farces they produced now and then at the Gallery of Illus-

tration in Regent Street, so well known to a previous generation. He, like his brilliant rival, George Grossmith, was for many years much in request at evening parties, as Grain always said, "to encourage conversation." Both were at various times obliged to administer rebuffs to those engaging them, who lacked—what shall I say?—a sense of proportion. Grain on a certain occasion arriving at a house of some pretension, was asked by the butler if he were the entertainer expected by his master. Somewhat taken aback, Grain said he was, upon which the butler, explaining that the company had not yet risen from the table, led him downstairs, and before Grain was aware, he found himself in the servants' hall! Grain, though much amazed, fell in with the situation. Noticing a cottage piano in the room, he sat down to it and gave the servants, to their great delight, music and song for about an hour. Eventually the butler informed him that his lordship was ready for the entertainment to begin. "Tell his lordship," said Grain, "that I have given my performance, and am now going home." The next day came a cheque for his fee, which he returned with thanks to his lordship for a very pleasant evening, and adding that it had been a great pleasure to entertain so enthusiastic an audience, and that under the circumstances he could not think of accepting his fee.

The familiar figures of Dick Grain and George Grossmith were amusing contrasts, the latter being very small and thin and the former very tall and fat. Though keen rivals, they were ever the best of friends,

and would make endless jokes at each other's expense. When in the height of their popularity, Sir Leslie Ward, "Spy," of *Vanity Fair*, made a telling caricature of the two. This drawing is perhaps the most successful of all his brilliant and many efforts, so faithfully limned are the expressions and bearing of the two men.

In the early eighties I had the privilege of meeting Robert Browning on several occasions. His appearance was far removed from the accepted idea of a poet, he being a stocky, sturdy little man, with a neatly trimmed grey beard and a healthy, ruddy complexion. His manners were hearty and cordial, he had no aloofness and no "frills." Always, it seemed to me, his proper place in life was aboard ship on the bridge in a sou'wester, with a smart breeze blowing.

I recall that at an evening party given by Mrs. Rudolph Lehmann, the mother of that much neglected but highly gifted composer, Miss Liza Lehmann, he was persuaded, after much pressing, to speak into a gramophone, then quite in its infancy and looked upon as a marvellous instrument. He elected to speak "The Ride from Aix to Ghent," which he proceeded to do with much spirit and effect, but in the middle of the second verse he suddenly stopped, and cried out, "God bless my soul! I have forgotten my own lines!" and he joined in our hearty laughter. Presently he recovered himself, and spoke the rest of the poem to much applause. A little time after this event the great poet joined the majority. A year passed, when I had the uncanny experience of hearing

that record in the company of many others who had been present at its making. There was again the familiar voice, the pause, his exclamation of astonishment, the roar of laughter from the audience, and again his taking up the lines, and the burst of applause. In those days, when the gramophone was hardly known, the effect was overwhelming, and set the whole company in the dumps.

CHAPTER XIII

MY PARENTS AND A THIRD VISIT TO AMERICA

Othello — *The Light that Failed* — Stage Mishaps — Madame Sarah Bernhardt—The Funeral of Henry Irving—Richard Harding Davis—Bernard Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra*—Henry James.

At the end of the run of *Mice and Men* at the Lyric Theatre, I revived *Othello* under the most trying circumstances, for only a few nights before the first night my mother went on the long journey, and whenever I played Othello afterwards my energy and spirit were ever painfully clouded by the memory of that awful ordeal. Some months before she went, she had urged me not to fail in giving the tragedy. I had pointed out the risks, from a financial point of view, of such a venture, and moreover, that physically I was not suited to the popular and conventional idea of the part. But she turned a deaf ear to any such objections, as she had ever done all her life with me when there was any question of money and expediency, and what she looked upon as my duty in trying to pursue the highest efforts. Always with that saintly character was the upward look, that seeking of the

highest and the purest in the way of life. She was with me to bless my coming and going until my fiftieth year, and her husband and sons and daughters came to her side as to a shrine for guidance and advice, and never did she fail in giving us help with her wisdom, her justice, and her great love.

A few weeks after, my father followed her. He was in Scotland at the time of my mother's death, which took place very suddenly. He had been in perfect health and spirits, but returned a stricken man, and we soon realized that he had no wish to "carry on" any more. Some days before he died, he insisted on going to see me play Othello. The spirit was to master the affliction so far, but after that he remained in his chair by the fire, and soon took to his bed. We had got for him one of those devoted and splendid women, a trained nurse. She, in common with so many English people, was never able to get her tongue round the name of Robertson, and when, towards the end, she addressed him as Mr. Forbes-Robinson, he turned upon her, saying: "Robertson is the patronymic!" These were the last words he uttered.

Like my mother, he never forced his children to any particular duty, but only led them to the end in view by persuasion and love. Later on, when the question of a calling or profession had to be considered, he invariably encouraged and helped us as far as in him lay, toward the life we expressed the wish to follow. I was helped with enthusiasm to

Photo by] [*L. Caswell Smith.*

J . F.-R. AS OTHELLO.

To face p. 220.

take up painting, and the fees for Heatherly's art school were forthcoming. My brother Ian's early wish, before he went on the stage, was to become an engineer, and he was received as a pupil at the celebrated Thornycroft yards. Norman chose the stage, Eric painting, and Leonard music. Such consideration for his children's ambitions is easy enough when there is a well-off father, but ours was not that by any means. We had been witness of cases where sons were forced into uncongenial occupations, and therefore we were all very much alive to the consideration shown us.

For many years my father was art critic on the *Sunday Times*, writing over the *nom de plume* of "Artis Amator." He was also a contributor to *The Art Journal*, *The Reader*, *The Academia*, and many other periodicals. His "Great Painters of Christendom" was a studious review of the artists from Cimabue to Turner and David Wilkie. His knowledge of history was considerable and he was always ready and able to explain to us the movements and developments of nations and peoples, their relations to each other, and their various influences on the advancement of man. In spite of restricted means he succeeded in collecting a considerable library, for he was a veritable bookman all his life. An inveterate smoker, he rarely touched wine or spirits, and partook of everything in moderation, except smoke. He was never laid up by illness. In his younger days he had a good tenor voice, and sang the old Scottish ballads with dramatic fervour and feeling.

Though afflicted with almost total blindness for the last fifteen years of his life, which robbed him of the companionship of his books, he never allowed it to cloud his high spirits and his enjoyment of life. In my very early days he led me to the love of Shakespeare, and by twelve years of age I was familiar with all the plays, and had committed to memory very many of the great passages. Toward the latter part of his life he took much interest in parochial matters, was Chairman of the Commissioners of Public Libraries and Museums of St. Giles, and attended various other boards.

I recall an incident connected with the workhouse which filled him with keen amusement. On passing through a sick ward he noticed some rather startling Biblical legends on the walls. One in particular aroused his ire. It was : "Prepare to meet thy God." At the next board meeting he pointed out to the guardians the depressing nature of the texts, explaining that they were not calculated to help the sick in any way, but very much the reverse. He then proposed a few Scriptural legends of a more encouraging nature. Upon which one worthy rose and expressed his pain and surprise that Mr. Forbes-Robertson should refer to Biblical texts as legends !

The company for *Othello* consisted of Miss Lena Ashwell and my wife, Sydney Valentine, Herbert Waring, Ian Robertson, Leon Quartermain, Graham Brown, and Ben Webster. Joseph Harker painted me some beautiful scenery.

Photo by] [*L. Caswell Smith.*

MISS GERTRUDE ELLIOTT AS MAISIE IN "THE LIGHT THAT FAILED."

To face p 222.

Once more I found myself in the position of having to play an exacting rôle eight times a week, and in this case the conditions were more trying than when I gave *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* for a run, as I had to prepare *The Light that Failed* during the seven weeks that *Othello* held the stage.

The Light that Failed, in spite of its poignant story, proved a great success. The stage version of Kipling's novel was done by Miss Constance Fletcher, who kept most happily the flavour and the character of the book.

Aubrey Smith, Sydney Valentine, William Farren, and Leon Quartermain, Miss Margaret Halstan, my wife, and Miss Nina Boucicault were in the cast; all gave of their best and played their parts to admiration.

A rough-haired terrier, a friend of Aubrey Smith's, had a very important part, "Binkie, by himself," as he very properly appeared with his brother actors in the bill of the play.

Every night he waited at the wings during the second act with his master, showing impatient interest as his cue came near; when the door was opened, he trotted in with the greatest regularity and, leaping on the table in the centre of Dick Heldar's studio, sat him down with his tongue out, smiling at the audience, and seldom failed of a reception. One night, however, he began to growl lowly, which was not set down in his part, and in spite of his master's saying, "Lie down, Binkie," the growls became louder, and ended in continuous barking, which

after a few minutes subsided. There was a silence, and the dialogue proceeded, when suddenly the barking was renewed.

What had angered him was this. Two ladies and a man were making their way to seats in the middle of the stalls, and Binkie, very properly, entered a protest against his scene being disturbed. The people having, with great deliberation, seated themselves, the man of the party presently rose to take off his overcoat, which action caused the second outbreak on Binkie's part. The unhappy late comers were between two fires, the protests of the dog and the hearty laughter of the audience.

During the whole of Binkie's scene, I, as Dick Heldar, was lying on a sofa supposed to be asleep, so that it was only after the act was over that I learned from Smith, when he apologized for his dog giving tongue, what had happened in the audience. I told him that Binkie's behaviour in the matter entirely met with my approval and filled me with respect in that he would not suffer the interruption of his scene by late comers. Human actors may put up with this sort of thing, but dog actors never. That, I am persuaded, was Binkie's attitude of mind on the question.

Binkie, alas! was not able to join the company on my coming American tour, and his substitute was a failure, for on the first night he got stage-fright, and when finding the doors closed on him, he made a flying leap over the lighted fireplace and was never seen again.

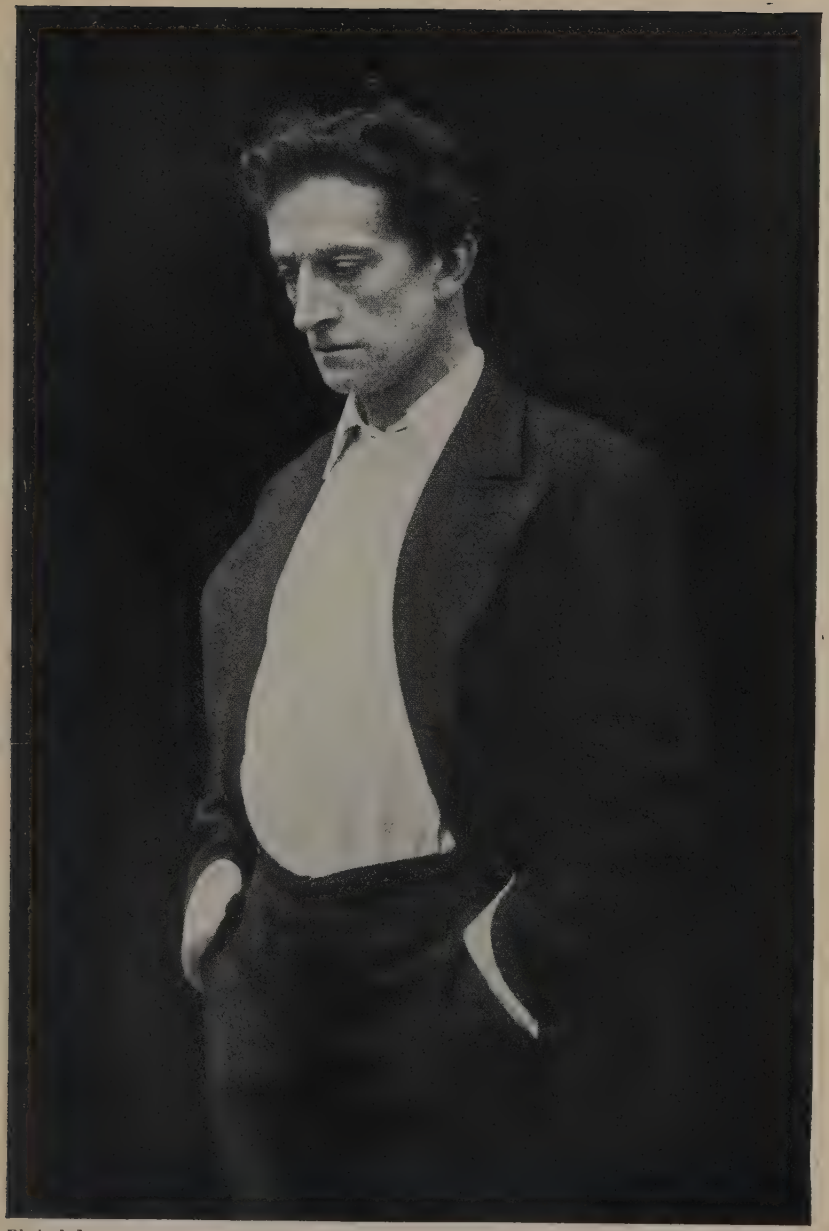


Photo by] [*L. Caswell Smith.*

DICK HELDAR IN "THE LIGHT THAT FAILED."

To face p. 224.

In my various productions at the Lyceum and other theatres, I avoided as far as possible all heavy building in the scenery and decorations. Having decided the plan, tone and colour, and character of a scene, I left the artist a free hand to paint solidity, not build it, and was never disappointed.

Incidentally, the scenic painters' beautiful art suffers terribly from the hard and crude effect of electric lighting, which is well enough as an adjunct, but as a substitute for gas is a hopeless failure. Never any more will scenes be so well lit as they were in the days of gas. I may recall a striking instance, one of several, which happened some years ago in a provincial town at which I was opening a tour. Being anxious about the state of an old scene which had been in the store room some time, I went to inspect it before the curtain was rung up. It had been a beautiful scene, even under electric light, of Hampstead Heath. To my amazement I found it mysteriously invested with far more beauty than ever it had had before. I appealed to my brother to explain this transformation, and thinking he must have had the scene repainted, but this was not the case. Said he : " If you will look up into the flies you will see the reason." I looked up and found the whole scene was lit by gas !

In the matter of scenic decorations of late years there has been a strong tendency on the part of some producers to call upon the scene-painter to depart from nature, and a rational treatment of the subjects to be presented. What advantage is

gained, except notoriety, by depicting, say, a forest scene in such a way as to convey the impression of a series of festooned dirty dish-cloths, or when the author has distinctly set down that his characters are situated in a sylvan glade, they should be surrounded by a blasted heath, and stone benches made to take the place of mossy banks, is for a healthy minded person hard to understand. These incongruities and affectations, these flummeries, are neither imaginative nor suggestive, as faddists would persuade us, but sheer audacity and impudence. I recall reading a serious play once in which the author, in describing a particular scene, said : "This scene must be frankly out of perspective." I read no more.

This sort of thing has been engendered and fostered by some painters and illustrators, who have become infected by an unwholesome and ungodly creed, the worship of the ugly. "Let me," says the infected one, "twist the human form into the most vile contortions and invest it with those attributes suggestive only of the loathsome leper. Beauty of line and figure is beneath my endeavours, I refuse to be trammelled with any mere laws of nature. I am a law unto myself. I portray the grandeur of hideousness. I proudly worship the gods of the grotesque and the obscene. Harmony I despise, it is discord that I seek. I shall startle the public, yea, and may even mould future generations, for a young wife, soon about to become a mother, may look upon my works, and her offspring in consequence may become a model worthy of my brush."

In September 1903 we sailed for America, this being my third visit, my first as manager. The business arrangements were undertaken by Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger, who then controlled a great number of theatres all over the States, and with whom my relations were always cordial.

My friend Arthur Lewis, the actor, put me in touch with this firm, the idea being that my performance of *Hamlet* might prove acceptable to the American theatre-going public. In the meantime, however, *The Light that Failed* had been so successful that it was decided to make this piece the attraction. I was hopeful on this point, as Charles Frohman had prophesied the success as a "cinch." I was not very clear as to what the actual meaning of a "cinch" might be, but that beaming, genial face of Frohman's led me to believe that he looked upon the play as certain of success. A "cinch," alas! it did not prove, but only a very moderate success, and after a few weeks I fell back on *Hamlet* with many misgivings.

I sent my brother Ian back to England for the scenery and dresses, etc. He, with great energy, got them over in less than three weeks from the date of his sailing from New York. He brought from my stores in London all the endless paraphernalia of scenery, armour, swords, chairs and tables, dresses and every detail intact, except no less a thing than Hamlet's left shoe! The discovery was only made on looking through my dresses about twenty-four hours before the first night, which

took place in Philadelphia. In despair I threw myself on the mercy of a bootmaker. Luckily for me he turned out to be a most sympathetic soul, for he saved me in my desperate state, saying : " Well, sir, the thing's impossible, but it must be done." In my gratitude I offered him seats for the first performance, but he declined, saying that he had seen Booth's *Hamlet* and he never intended to see another. This was a damper, but I got my shoes.

The kind shoemaker had touched me on the raw, for I had been trying to put from my mind the fact that I was about to face all the splendid traditions the public held so dearly in connection with their idol, Booth. However, the play went well, and was over by a few minutes after eleven o'clock, which I gathered, being unusual in productions of that play, was an agreeable surprise to the audience. My Hamlet was most favourably received, as was my wife's Ophelia.

From Philadelphia we went to New York. The audiences were sparse for the first week, but afterwards they grew nightly, till the theatre was full at every performance. The improvement in the nightly attendance was, I believe, mainly due to a flattering leader in the *New York Times* which drew attention to the poor houses and urged the public to support me.

There were occasions when I was called upon to play Hamlet nine times a week, due to the custom of giving morning performances on all public holidays. Exacting as these particular weeks were, there was one ninth performance I did not grudge, nor do I

believe I ever played with less fatigue, so buoyed up was I with all the responsive and electrical character, as it were, of the audience. The New York actors had done me the signal honour of sending me a round robin, asking for a special performance of *Hamlet* on a morning when they would not be acting, a spontaneous appeal I could not resist. The Knickerbocker Theatre was crowded with all the players in town, and I and my company received a welcome at their hands that moved me deeply, and that I cherish with a grateful memory as the most eventful episode in my theatrical career.

Endless stories are told in connection with the playing of *Hamlet.* Let me set down one or two incidents of a quaint nature that came under my own experience.

A curious incident once took place in the graveyard scene. We had come to the entrance of the funeral procession, and Ophelia, being duly laid in the grave, the Queen proceeded to scatter flowers with the words, "Sweets to the sweet, farewell," over Ophelia, when there was the most amazing sight, for no sooner had the flowers fallen into the grave than they flew up high above the heads of the actors! The flowers, which were made of tissue paper, were blown up by a draught caused by the heating apparatus.

I think it was in Washington when my prompter one night told me that the fireman of the theatre, having watched the progress of the play with great interest, said to him: "Say, this is a bully play your governor's got. Did he get it written for him?"

The next morning I met an acquaintance at the club who did not share the fireman's enthusiasm. During our conversation he incidentally remarked that he had been to the theatre the night before and pronounced upon what he had seen thus :

" I liked you, but it's a fool play ! "

On another occasion when *Hamlet* was being played, the dresser begged the lady she was attending to enlighten her as to the author and the play of which she had never heard. When being told that it was the work of the greatest of all poets, and that he lived three hundred years ago, she remarked :

" Land sakes, you don't say ; quite a back number, isn't he ? "

There are times when much " comic relief " may be introduced into a tragedy by the actor who does not adhere to the text.

I remember a certain member of my company who, being an understudy, was suddenly called upon to play Polonius, causing considerable diversion in the closet scene by substituting his own words for Shakespeare's. It was at the point where Hamlet passes his sword through the arras, crying, " How now ! a rat ? Dead for a ducat, dead ! " Instead of the cry from Polonius, " Oh, I am slain ! " came in a matter of fact and somewhat annoyed tone, " O God, I'm killed." To make matters worse, on lifting the arras, expecting to discover the dead Polonius, I found my friend comfortably seated on the floor with his great fat back to the audience. I

omitted the line that follows : " Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell ! " as being under the circumstances irrelevant, and hastened to address the Queen with " Peace, sit you down," but there was no peace, for the audience was in convulsions of laughter, and there had been more " business " of sitting down than I had bargained for.

Apropos of mishaps upon the stage, I recall one that happened to that greatly gifted woman, Miss Elizabeth Robins, during a performance of Miss Constance Fletcher's play of *Mrs. Lessingham*, at the Garrick. It was in a scene where I, as her husband, was trying to soothe her distressed condition. She had bought for the part a necklace of imitation diamonds and pearls, which she wore clasped firmly round her throat. Suddenly, to my consternation, the necklace broke, and the jewels, that I knew had cost her a considerable sum, began to drop on the carpet. While trying to comfort her, I managed to get most of the jewels into my joined hands. So far so good, but we were both in evening dress, and, my hands being full, I could not stow the things into my pockets without exposing the mishap to the audience, as we were standing in the middle of the stage. She at that moment gave a deep sigh which caused a momentary hiatus between her bodice and her chest. With what I consider a magnificent inspiration, I quickly poured the whole lot into that slight gap and got from her a stifled, gasping " Thank you," and we continued the scene.

After the curtain fell I picked up the few that

The next morning I met an acquaintance at the club who did not share the fireman's enthusiasm. During our conversation he incidentally remarked that he had been to the theatre the night before and pronounced upon what he had seen thus :

" I liked you, but it's a fool play ! "

On another occasion when *Hamlet* was being played, the dresser begged the lady she was attending to enlighten her as to the author and the play of which she had never heard. When being told that it was the work of the greatest of all poets, and that he lived three hundred years ago, she remarked :

" Land sakes, you don't say ; quite a back number, isn't he ? "

There are times when much " comic relief " may be introduced into a tragedy by the actor who does not adhere to the text.

I remember a certain member of my company who, being an understudy, was suddenly called upon to play Polonius, causing considerable diversion in the closet scene by substituting his own words for Shakespeare's. It was at the point where Hamlet passes his sword through the arras, crying, " How now ! a rat ? Dead for a ducat, dead ! " Instead of the cry from Polonius, " Oh, I am slain ! " came in a matter of fact and somewhat annoyed tone, " O God, I'm killed." To make matters worse, on lifting the arras, expecting to discover the dead Polonius, I found my friend comfortably seated on the floor with his great fat back to the audience. I

omitted the line that follows : " Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell ! " as being under the circumstances irrelevant, and hastened to address the Queen with " Peace, sit you down," but there was no peace, for the audience was in convulsions of laughter, and there had been more " business " of sitting down than I had bargained for.

Apropos of mishaps upon the stage, I recall one that happened to that greatly gifted woman, Miss Elizabeth Robins, during a performance of Miss Constance Fletcher's play of *Mrs. Lessingham*, at the Garrick. It was in a scene where I, as her husband, was trying to soothe her distressed condition. She had bought for the part a necklace of imitation diamonds and pearls, which she wore clasped firmly round her throat. Suddenly, to my consternation, the necklace broke, and the jewels, that I knew had cost her a considerable sum, began to drop on the carpet. While trying to comfort her, I managed to get most of the jewels into my joined hands. So far so good, but we were both in evening dress, and, my hands being full, I could not stow the things into my pockets without exposing the mishap to the audience, as we were standing in the middle of the stage. She at that moment gave a deep sigh which caused a momentary hiatus between her bodice and her chest. With what I consider a magnificent inspiration, I quickly poured the whole lot into that slight gap and got from her a stifled, gasping " Thank you," and we continued the scene.

After the curtain fell I picked up the few that

had fallen and gave them to her. During the interval I knocked at her dressing-room door and asked if she found her necklace was complete. She answered that she thought it was, and I fancied I heard the jewels dropping tick, tick on the floor! A reticence forbids me to explain why this incident reminds me of one about Tennyson, not, I fancy, generally known, which I had of a friend of the young lady to whom it happened. She had long wished to meet the poet. At last the supreme moment came for her when she was introduced to him at a garden-party, and had the felicity to sit by his side. She tried various subjects, but somehow the conversation languished, when suddenly the poet made this alarming remark :

" Madam, your stays are too tight."

She, in some trepidation : " No, indeed, I assure you they are not."

" Yes they are, I can hear them creaking."

This being too much for her, she fled. Presently she discovered that the poet was pursuing her round tents and seats, and at last having headed her off, he said very graciously :

" Madam, I have to apologize, it was not your stays that were creaking, but my new braces."

Sometimes odd coincidences occur in the performance of a play. A notable one happened during that of *Frou-Frou*. I was playing Valreas, the husband, who follows his young wife and her lover to Venice, to Madame Modjeska's Frou-Frou, by far and away the most beautiful performance of that part in

every respect it has been my lot to witness. The play was being given in the theatre at the Crystal Palace, and all went well till the entrance of the broken husband to his wife's sitting-room. "You here?" says she. "Yes," answers Valreas. The instant that "Yes" was uttered the brass band in the main part of the building crashed out, "See the Conquering Hero Comes"! The band, after a protracted interval, was stopped. It was a weird and fantastic moment, and put me into such a rage that I could scarcely go on with my part, but the dear lady was quite calm, and quickly brought the audience back into the poignant scene. Apropos of that woman's exceptional magnetism, I remember going in to Lady Bancroft's box during a performance of *La Dame aux Camélias* by Sarah Bernhardt, which she gave in London soon after Modjeska had stirred the town in the same part. The sole remark she made upon the acting was, "Well, Forby, we've seen something better than this, haven't we?"

Sarah Bernhardt was a brilliant player, full of the tricks of her trade, and fairly versatile, but in my humble opinion eminently theatrical. Her voice was melodious, but very monotonous, and she was given to screeching when in a passion. Often the effects were got illegitimately, and at any cost. In short, as it seemed to me, she did not take a very high ideal of her art, a quality which was always patent in Aimée Desclée, Ristori, Ellen Terry, Modjeska, Réjane, Elenora Duse, and Mrs. Kendal. These women stuck to nature. But then, I am given to understand

that an adherence to nature in any art is nowadays quite out of date, so perhaps Madame Bernhardt was only anticipating this advanced "movement."

We visited, on the American tour of 1903, all the leading cities in the east. To the south, as far as Richmond, that picturesque old town with its soft-voiced people, and westward to the restless and energetic city of Chicago.

Chicago boasts a very imposing art gallery, and the art school connected with it has more students than any other art school the world over. It is administered in a broad, practical fashion, and all sorts of plastic and pictorial art are fostered, even to the designing of pictorial posters. The general standard of the students' work is high, and their energy and enthusiasm remarkable.

Lincoln Park, bordering on the lake, is full of sylvan beauty, with small lakes and streams fed by Michigan's fresh-water sea, and St. Gaudens's noble statue of the Immortal President, embowered in trees as a central shrine.

Chicago itself cannot, with the wildest stretch of imagination, be called a beautiful city, but it will become one, and at no great distance of time, when her citizens' ambitious and admirable projects are carried out.

Many happy hours have I spent in the University Club of that city, sumptuously housed on the lake front. In the dining-room is a great stained-glass light, with all the arms of the numerous American universities emblazoned thereon. Conspicuous in

the centre, and on larger shields than the others, are the arms of Oxford and Cambridge, a graceful and dignified tribute to the Mother Country's great seats of learning. That little patch of leaded glass, how valuable and important such a symbol, in fostering and increasing the amicable feeling between America and the British Empire, more precious than any diplomatic treaties, or empty words that come and go.

On returning to England we made a tour in the Provinces. At Christmas 1904, leaving my wife in London, I went to Canada to begin my second managerial tour, and opened in Toronto with a new play by the gifted H. V. Esmond, called *Love and Man*. I was fortunate in having Miss Kate Rorke for my leading lady. This play was alternated with *Hamlet*, and the tour ended in the late spring of 1905.

When I got home I was introduced to a new member of the family. Our second child, Jean, had come into the world when I was playing in New York. One afternoon, while entertaining a friend, to whom I had confided my anxiety for word from home, I was amused to find how the slightest incident was turned into a good omen by his sympathetic and quick American wit. A few minutes after he had left my door the longed-for message was in my hands.

Dr. Distin Maddick had built on the site of the old Prince of Wales's the handsome Scala Theatre, which I opened in September 1905 with *The Conqueror*, by Millicent Duchess of Sutherland. Her treatment of the leading character, a mighty

soldier overpowering many kingdoms who discovers at last that all his power cannot compel the love of the woman he had set his heart on, was full of poetic imagination, and the dismay of the all-powerful conqueror was finely conceived. Henry Ainley played the warrior's rival with great distinction and charm.

The Conqueror was followed by *Mrs. Grundy*, a graceful comedy from the pen of Madeline Lucette Ryley—the non-success of which I fear was largely due to my own shortcomings on the first night through ill health.

During the preparations for this play, while resting in bed one Sunday morning, I saw a headline in the paper : " Death of Sir Henry Irving." Shocked and deeply grieved, I rose at once with the determination to act in the matter of his funeral, as I felt there was but one place in which my dear friend must lie, and that was the Abbey. There was no time to be lost if this was to be brought about. Almost before I was dressed, my brother Norman called, and we settled that he should at once see what the attitude of the authorities of the Abbey would be. Meantime I spoke over the telephone with all the leading actors then in town, and got their ready consent that I should act for us all in this urgent matter.

My brother shortly returned from his mission with the good news that the authorities had received his proposal with the keenest interest, and that the Dean was much in favour of the Abbey being the

resting-place for Irving, provided that his family were willing he should be cremated and that two members of all the arts and professions should be got to state that the idea met with their approval. The names were to be secured within two days. It being Sunday many were away from town, but by the evening I had many notes and telephone messages of sympathy heartily in agreement with the proposal. Early on Monday morning I saw H. B. Irving, who had just come to town from a tour, and learned that he and Lady Irving were in favour of cremation.

By Tuesday I had nearly all the names required, and after getting from the Abbey an extension of another day, I had my list complete.

Armed with telegrams and notes from many of the highest in the arts, letters, the law, and the Navy and Army, I hastened to the Abbey, and delivered them well before the time allotted me.

The Dean and Chapter, with sympathetic thoughtfulness, had chosen a most appropriate spot for the grave, a spot strangely enough vacant in the Poets' Corner, for Irving lies beside his brilliant predecessor, Garrick.

We held a meeting at Sir Charles Wyndham's house, and eventually waited on the Dean for his formal sanction, which he gave through Canon Duckworth, being himself sick in bed.

Irving's ashes were removed from Lady Burdett Coutts's house in Stratton Street very quietly the evening before the funeral, followed only by his sons. I do not recall any statement in the Press

being made as to when this little cortège would pass through the streets on its way to the Abbey. As I remember, only a few of us knew, but somehow the news got about, for I was witness of lines of waiting people for a long way down Piccadilly, and my brother Norman, who followed the modest coach and hearse to the Abbey, told me that all the coachmen of public and private vehicles removed their hats as the little cortège went by. Such was the love of the people for Irving.

I had the privilege of being one of his twelve pall-bearers. They were Sir Squire Bancroft, Sir John Hare, Sir Arthur Pinero, Sir Alma Tadema, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Sir Herbert Tree, Sir George Alexander, Sir Charles Wyndham, Professor Dewar, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Tennyson. It was admitted that the funeral ceremony was the most touching and impressive of any that had taken place in the Abbey within living memory. Vast crowds filled the whole edifice even to the triforium. Many of the leading players acted as stewards and ushered the people to their allotted seats, and the whole of this complicated business was controlled to perfection by Sir George Alexander. The pall-bearers and chief mourners assembled in the Chapter House, and from thence moved out in procession to the front of the altar. The pall was composed entirely of bay leaves sewn closely together, and the effect of this undulating, shimmering mass of green was very original and beautiful. After the first part of the service, the procession moved round to the

Poets' Corner. The service completed, two distinguished members of the Théâtre français, who had come specially from Paris to represent the house of Molière, knelt by the side of the grave while flowers were strewn by many on the coffin, and then the devoted crowd slowly dispersed.

During the latter part of Irving's career the fates dealt hardly with him—indeed I do not know that he found them at any time of his life very gracious. What he won he got by sheer hard work, persistent energy and dogged determination, and in the face of certain physical disadvantages for the calling he had chosen. Not in any sense could he be called a lucky man.

After a triumphant first night of his second revival of *Richard the Third*, he had the misfortune to dislocate his right knee by falling on the stairs at his chambers in Grafton Street, and for many weeks lay prostrate. Though the theatre had of course to be closed during that time, he generously paid all the company and staff their full salaries. The money which had been taken for considerable booking in advance had to be returned, and when at last he was able to take up his part, for some mysterious reason the public showed very little interest in the revival, which before his accident gave every promise of a good run.

Some short time after, when he was about to revive several of his plays at the end of the Lyceum season, prior to an autumn tour, the whole of the scenery and properties of all his plays, except the

one then in the theatre, were burnt in the railway arches where they had been stored. Nothing was left of what represented many thousands of pounds but a mass of ashes, which covered the floors to an extent of six feet in depth. A third disaster quickly fell upon him while on a provincial tour, when he caught a severe chill in Edinburgh, and his parts were filled by my brother Norman and others for the rest of the season.

Following soon after these misfortunes came a demand from the County Council that he spend ten thousand pounds on alterations to the Lyceum Theatre. The house was in excellent condition, for he had kept it in good state, and had made many improvements at his own cost. So far as the safety of the public was concerned, the exits were numerous, and the house was always emptied of its audience in a few minutes. The stage door, and the approaches thereto, were wider than those of any other playhouse in London, and there was a second door on the opposite side of the stage, as well as the big door by which the scenery was passed in and out. There were two wooden staircases to the dressing-rooms which would certainly have been better in stone or iron, but this alteration could have been made for as many shillings as the pounds the Council had called on him to spend. Irving could not after his heavy losses provide the sum, and the theatre he had made an institution of world-wide fame was torn down.

Now at this very time improvements were toward

in the Strand which necessitated the removal with other buildings of the Gaiety Theatre, the home of burlesque and musical comedy. A fine site had been given the Gaiety Theatre Company and plans had been submitted for the theatre it was prepared to build. The elevation on the plans was not considered important enough, and the Company pleading that it could not afford a better one, the London County Council actually gave the Gaiety Theatre Company the very sum that would have saved the Lyceum !

Henry Irving was full of a quaint humour all his own, and could deliver with a stiletto-like thrust neat phrases, and press the sting right home when he had a mind. The late Richard Mansfield, at the time he was playing *Richard III* in London, was complaining to Irving that the part excited and fatigued him to such an extent that he could not sleep o' nights, it was wearing him out, with a good deal more to this effect, quite ignoring the fact that Irving had played the part many times himself and knew all about its exhausting nature. Irving bore it all for some time, and then at last he said : " Ah, then—a—why do you play him if you find him so unwholesome ? "

On another occasion Richard Harding Davis, a splendid fellow, and heart and soul with us from the very beginning of the war, but a trifle vain in his young days, was brought to a supper-party at the Garrick Club, where there were some distinguished people of whom Irving was one. Davis came into the supper-room in a wonderful fur coat,

which, when he threw off and hurled at a waiter's head, exposed to the amazed view of the company some decorations on his dress-coat. He was introduced all round, and while yet the company were under the dazzlement of this display, Irving, who knew him well and his weakness, remarked, fingering the various medals : " Ah—swimming ? "

Irving was inordinately fond of practical jokes of all sorts and descriptions, and those carried out with the help of his intimate friend J. L. Toole, whom he loved like a brother, would fill a volume. The following, not however connected with Toole, was told me by an actor who was witness of the joke. He was with a touring company in Ireland, of which Irving, then a young man, was a member. It appears that he and the acting manager were not on good terms, but on an expedition of some eight or ten of the company to explore the beauties of Killarney, he and Irving had made it up. Of this fact the other actors were not aware, so that when they were making their way to some particular coign of vantage on the shores of the lake, and noticed that the two, who had lagged far behind, were in violent altercation, they were somewhat concerned. However, they proceeded on their walk, and in about twenty minutes had gathered together on a rock some three feet above the lake admiring the view. Meantime, when out of sight of the others, Irving and his friend ceased their mock quarrel, which they had acted while they were in view of their friends. Irving then made the amazing request that

the manager should cut his (Irving's) finger. Upon the man refusing, he did it himself. He then smeared his face with blood, bound up his finger with his handkerchief, undid his tie and collar, opened and rumpled his shirt, threw down his hat, and set his long hair in disorder. He bade his friend remain behind, and hastened to join the others. Suddenly behind them came his voice joining in the praise of the view, "Charming, beautiful." All turned round and saw Irving, looking pale of face and in disorder. They cried in chorus, "Where's Jack?" "He's lying by the roadside half a mile back." "Lying by the roadside. What do you mean?" "I mean what I say, he is ly-ing" (always two very distinct syllables with Irving) "by the roadside with his feet in the ditch." H. J. Montague, in some alarm: "Irving, there's blood on your face." "Is there?" handing him his handkerchief spotted with blood, "then wipe it off." Poor Montague, with a shocked exclamation, stepped back, stumbled, and fell into the lake!

While my wife and I were taking a short holiday in Switzerland during the Christmas of 1906, I received a cable from New York saying arrangements would be made for me to produce Bernard Shaw's *Cæsar and Cleopatra* in the autumn, and on my return to London I began my preparations to this end.

Some years before, Bernard Shaw had written the play, with me in his mind for the name part, but no proper opportunity had been afforded me to undertake the production. Its reception at the Amsterdam Theatre in New York was most cordial

and hearty. Shaw had conducted the rehearsals with his usual tact and skill, getting the best out of us all. Wishing him to witness the first night in New York, I urged him to come with us, but he declined, saying in his characteristic fashion: "You see, were I to go with you to America, I should become so popular that they would want to make me President, and that would bore me." This quip got into the papers and was actually taken seriously by some acquaintances of mine!

The play was well received all over America and Canada, and in the provinces at home. In London, I regret to say, it was not much appreciated. Shaw's human and humane Cæsar did not appear to be understood.

In some quarters statements were made to the effect that the reason *Cæsar and Cleopatra* found more favour in New York than in London was that the New York audiences were less sophisticated! To those who know America's theatre-going public these insular pronouncements were highly amusing.

From my experience of the London audiences who witnessed *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, I came to the conclusion that they were clean cut into two opposite camps, those who actually disliked the play and those who admired it, and were enthusiastic in their praise. The camp of the admirers was keenly alive to the brilliant imaginative fancy of the author which brought together Cleopatra, Cæsar, and the Sphinx; it rejoiced in the quick transitions from grave to gay, the tilts at British prejudices, the cunning, wild,

Photo by] [*L. Caswell Smith.*

J. F. R. AS CÆSAR.

To face p. 244

and tempestuous character of Cleopatra. The high philosophy of the lines on revenge went home to them, as did the majestical flow of Cæsar's address to the Sphinx, and the investing of Cæsar with human feelings, and above all a keen sense of humour.

The other camp neither felt nor saw these things, but indeed declared that Shaw's Cæsar was undignified ! Rather, as I gathered from the colour of their criticisms, would they have preferred a solemn, pompous figure declaiming turgid blank verse, robed all in white, continually trying to look like a plaster cast of a spiritless Canova statue. In short, the conventional mind was quite upset.

Of the many fine passages in this play, I quote, with Mr. Bernard Shaw's permission, the following stirring speech on vengeance. Cleopatra, having had Pothinus assassinated for defaming her to Cæsar, defends herself thus :

" Listen to me, Cæsar, if one man in all Alexandria can be found to say that I did wrong, I swear to have myself crucified on the door of the palace by my own slaves." And Cæsar answers :

" If one man in all the world can be found now or forever, to know that you did wrong, that man will have either to conquer the world as I have, or be crucified by it. (The uproar in the streets reaches them.) Do you hear ? These knockers at your gate are also believers in vengeance and stabbing. You have slain their leader, it is right that they shall slay you. If you doubt it, ask your fellow-counsellors here, and then in the name of that right (he empha-

sizes the word with great scorn) shall I not slay them for murdering their Queen, and be slain in my turn by their countrymen as the invader of their Fatherland? Can Rome do less than slay these slayers too, to show the world how Rome avenges her sons and her honour? And so to the end of history, murder shall breed murder, always in the name of right and honour and peace until the gods are tired of blood and create a race that can understand."

I kept the play in my repertoire for several years, and always the attendance improved for *Cæsar and Cleopatra* on a second visit to a town. This was notably the case on its revival at Drury Lane during my farewell season, when a far better reception was accorded it than when first it was given in London.

One night, while sitting in a provincial hotel, after the performance, waiting for a train that was to pass through the town at about two o'clock in the morning, I was reading an enchanting tale of Henry James's called *Covering End*, which struck me as being admirably suited for the stage. I there and then wrote to James asking him if he were willing it should be turned into a play. He replied that the story had originally been a play written for Miss Ellen Terry some years before, but as she had not been able to make use of it, he had asked her if he might put the play into story form and publish it together with some others. Miss Terry gave her consent, and James assuming, wrongly, as it turned out, that she had thereby relinquished her acting rights, sent me the play, which he re-named *The High Bid*.

On March 27, 1908, I produced the piece in Edinburgh, and the next morning, to my consternation, I got a telegram from Miss Terry, who was playing in Edinburgh the same week, saying : " You have my play ! " We then discovered that she did not consider she had parted with her acting rights when agreeing to its being published in story form. It was a most unfortunate misunderstanding, soon, however, cleared up, but embarrassing for me at the time.

We asked a few friends to meet James, who had come to Edinburgh to see the first performance. Amongst them was Mrs. Sellar, a wonderful old lady of eighty, who, on taking her leave, said in her frank and open way : " Well, Mr. James, I am going to see your play to-morrow night, I hope I shall understand it ! " At which James laughed in the best of good humour. Strangely enough *The High Bid* was entirely free from his usually involved and complicated style.

The play teemed with delicate romance, full of charm and freshness of treatment, and all in the high comedy vein. He had intended it to be in one act, but proving much too long, I persuaded him to divide it into three acts, or rather scenes, as the action was continuous. My wife gave a very delightful performance of a young American girl spellbound by the beauties of an ancient English home, and eventually by its owner. The play, however, proved of far too delicate a fibre and literary elegance to appeal to a general public.

Henry James and I found time to wander in the old town, which he had not visited for many years. His enjoyment of all he saw was delightful, and in his rich, grave voice, he touched on various incidents of the past, sidelights on little history, which quickly sprung to his mind, as he renewed his acquaintance with the romantic surroundings.

We went to the National Gallery, where we stood for a long time before the matchless Raeburns, and we agreed that he was equal to any of the old masters. He was much exercised at finding a strong, high iron grille which was at that time round Queen Mary's bed at Holyrood, and when I had explained that it had been placed there since the time when a young man in a fit of exaltation had thrown himself full length on the bed, from which he had been removed by force, James characteristically delivered himself of a discourse with analytical nicety on what must have been the young man's emotions.

There was, by the way, at one time a guardian of Queen Mary's bedchamber and the rooms adjacent who had a quaint sceptical humour unusual with custodians. He would describe to visitors the murder of Rizzio thus : " Having been stabbed in the Queen's presence, he was dragged from this chamber by the murderers, and thrown behind the door in the next room. The spot I will now show you—you will observe that the bloodstains on the floor are still visible. This is all the more remarkable, in that the flooring has been three several times renewed."

There is a spot in the Athens of the north, to which I had intended to lead James, but failed to do so through lack of time. It is the resting-place of de Quincey. Few people, I fancy, know that he lies against a wall in the churchyard close under the beetling Castle Rock, a place beautifully appropriate. Many years ago I read in Professor Masson's *Life of de Quincey* that the grave was in sad neglect. At my first opportunity I sought the grave, and found to my delight that the sacred spot was no longer neglected, but very much the reverse, for it was trim and bright with flowers, and evidently quite lately tended, for the flowers had been watered, and by a woman, as there was a fine lace cambric handkerchief caught in a shrub at the foot of the grave. Chancing to glance at a tablet on the wall to the left of that of de Quincey's, I read the name of Rufus Woodward. The inscription stated that he was a young American, a Yale student from Torrington, Con., that he had come to Edinburgh to continue his studies, that he had died suddenly, and that his friends in Edinburgh, amongst whom he was known as the amiable American stranger, had set up the tablet, the date of which was one year earlier than that of de Quincey's. The tended grave that had been so long neglected, the Castle Rock, the woman's handkerchief, and "the amiable American stranger," seemed all so suggestive of de Quincey.

I do not recall among men such an idol, such an adored fetish, as it were, in the eyes of his friends, as was Henry James. There was a mysterious charm

about the man quite indescribable. A delightful hour of talk comes to my mind that my wife and I had with him in his little garden perched above the red roofs of Rye. Some trend in the conversation prompted him to speak of his youthful days. He told us of the yearly travels on the Continent he and his brother William took when boys, under the guidance of their mother, and how much they were indebted to her for their understanding and appreciation of beautiful things, and of the fine influence she had had upon their lives. These tributes to their mother, unfolding many sacred memories, filled him with a lively emotion, as he sat between us on the bench facing the garden door. I like to think he was fond of us both.

The last time we saw him was a day or two after the declaration of war. We had called to inquire after his health, which had not been good, and were about to leave, when he came out into the entrance hall and detained us. Immediately he began to speak of the appalling situation into which we had fatuously allowed ourselves to drift, snug in our fool's paradise. He was deeply moved, and his voice shook with indignant rage at the arch-plotters against the peace of the world. He had watched for many years the growing menace of the Hun, and bemoaned our unpreparedness, and the deaf ear the vast majority of the nation turned towards the pleadings of Lord Roberts. Being the sensitive man he was, and loving our country as he did, I am persuaded the war hastened his end.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK

Canada and its Growth—Government House—Admiral Evans—Ever-changing New York—The Morgan Library—San Francisco to New Orleans—Colorado State Prison.

ON THE READING of plays there is no end, and I have often, during my managerial career, deplored the time one was obliged to devote to this unprofitable reading, which might have been given to more congenial literature. I once out of curiosity counted the plays I had received through the post only in the course of three months and found they numbered one hundred and twenty-five, only two or three of which were worth considering. Some, however, would afford a vast deal of entertainment so ingenuous and artless were they in subject and treatment. A very large number were in blank verse, these were the most trying.

Once, on asking the author of a very heavy play in verse why he could not tell the story in prose instead of trying to vie with the great Elizabethans, and pointing out that even Shakespeare continually broke into prose, I was answered that much of Shakespeare's verse was very indifferent, and that his custom of introducing prose was to be deprecated!

One day in the spring of 1908, while trying to

decide what my repertoire should be for the autumn, since I had no new play even on the horizon, I got a telegram from Jerome K. Jerome saying he must read me a play. The next day he read *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* to my wife and me. Briefly the action of the play is laid in an ordinary Bloomsbury lodging-house, into which comes a stranger who so influences the minds of his fellow-lodgers that they are translated all to a higher ideal of life, and peace and love and contentment comes to them.

I have to confess that though much amused by the brightness of the first act, I was somewhat alarmed when the author began to read the second, and I realized that there was practically no plot and that the rest of the piece was to consist of a series of duologues, I said to myself : " Bother the man, he is wasting my time." As the reading proceeded, however, my wife and I gradually became deeply impressed with the elevating character of the theme. At the end of the reading I could not at once say whether I would accept the play, as I was disturbed at its unusual character, for in the ordinary sense of the term it was no play at all. Jerome departed with the promise from me that I would give him my answer the next day. Later, in talking over the question with my wife, I said : " Well, I don't think this play will draw, but I suppose we shall have to do it ? " She agreed with me on both points, saying : " Some people will like it very much, but not enough people to make it a popular success." The long and short of it was, we were both in love with the

high motive of the play, and decided to produce it solely on that score. As time proved, we were well rewarded for our enthusiasm.

After much seeking, we were fortunate in getting together an admirable company, and right loyally they worked to get the spirit of the play. Here is the cast.

Joey Wright (a bookmaker)	... Mr. Ernest Hendrie.
Christopher Penney (an artist)	... Mr. H. Marsh Allen.
Major Tompkins (retired) ...	... Mr. Ian Robertson.
Mrs. Tompkins (his wife) ...	... Miss Kate Carlyon.
Vivian (his daughter) ...	... Miss Alice Crawford.
Jake Samuels (of the city) ...	... Mr. Edward Sass.
Harry Larkcome (his jackal)	... Mr. Wilfred Forster.
Miss Kite (unattached) ...	... Miss Haidee Wright.
Mrs. Percival de Hooley ...	... Miss Lytton.
Stasia	... Miss Gertrude Elliott.
Mrs. Sharpe (the landlady) ...	... Miss Agnes Thomas.
The Third Floor Back ...	... Mr. Forbes-Robertson.

Having made a trial canter in the provinces for two weeks, we opened at Sir George Alexander's Theatre on September 1, 1908.

After the first night there was some alarmed flutterings in the Lord Chamberlain's office, as it appears to have been put about that Mr. Jerome intended the Passer By to be a representation of the Saviour, and that I, in the interpretation, had aided and abetted him. This was, of course, sheer nonsense. The alarm I was able to dissipate by inviting the disturbed ones to witness the performance, and I received a letter admitting there was no offence in the play or its representation.

I played the piece regularly for four years, and for another four years in repertoire. With the exception of *Hamlet*, it was the greatest financial success I ever had. Many pastors, both in England and America, made Jerome's theme the text of a sermon, and the first to do so was the late Archdeacon Wilberforce. Many hundreds of letters, of a laudatory character, I got from all sorts of people, some couched in touching reference to their personal troubles which the play had helped them to bear. Prominent ministers of every denomination, Presbyterians, Baptists, Wesleyans, Roman Catholics, the Church of England, Christian Scientists and Jews, all have called at my dressing-room at the theatre to express their admiration of Jerome's doctrine of the Better Self. In the vast theatres of America, where two-thirds of the audience were far removed from the stage, the play was nevertheless followed with rapt attention, nor can I recall any instance, except one in New York, where disturbance was caused by people moving, or even preparing to move, from their seats towards the end of the play. On the contrary, no one ventured to move till the fall of the curtain on the Stranger's words : " I came because you wanted me." Such was the influence of Jerome's great inspiration.

In September 1909 I took *The Passing* to America, this time on my own financial responsibility, and opened in Miss Maxine Elliott's beautiful theatre with some trepidation, for though the piece had had a long run in London, it did not follow that it would

appeal to a New York audience, but to my great relief it proved a sweeping success.

At the end of the New York season, we visited Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa, where we had the pleasure of being entertained by Lord and Lady Grey. Government House was very familiar to us, as in a previous year we had received much kindness and hospitality from Lord and Lady Minto ; we were also invited by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught the last time we went to Canada. Thus we were witness of the high esteem, and indeed affection these distinguished Governors-General won for themselves in Canada by their untiring efforts in every direction for the welfare of its people.

I have watched Canada grow by leaps and bounds. I have watched the development of her railways and lands, the increase of her population, the beautifying of her cities, the energy of her people, and year by year, ever on leaving her hospitable shores I have remembered King George's historic words, when, as Prince of Wales, he returned from a visit to that country: "Wake up, England."

The next year I took Jerome's play to the eastern towns of America, starting in Washington. On my several visits to that city of palaces it was my privilege ever to be welcome at a modest house, where dwelt a modest man, one of America's greatest sailors, Admiral Evans, affectionately known throughout the land as Fighting Bob, a nickname which, however, he disliked. It was good to see him in the midst of his adoring family, and to listen to

some of his experiences which had, by the way, to be dragged out of him. There was, however, one subject on which he was readily eloquent, and of which he never tired, and that was the British Navy. Immediately would the handsome old face light up and beam with pleasure as he sang its praises. Particularly did he dwell upon the good-fellowship and perfect understanding between the two Navies. Soon after I last saw him, he took the Fleet round to the Pacific Coast, though a sick man at the time. He returned to his home by land, very soon to pass away.

I recall happy hours at the beautiful Washington home of the author Thomas Nelson Page, and at luncheon-parties in the Congressional library at the invitation of Mr. Putnam, the head librarian, where, amongst other interesting people, I had the great pleasure of meeting that distinguished soldier, General Leonard Wood. On my last visit to Washington I was sent for by President Wilson, with whom I had a brief, but very pleasant, talk. I found him a most interesting contrast to the magnetic Roosevelt, who incidentally gripped my hand into a pulp ! I met Mr. Taft during his presidency, being introduced to him by Mr. Charles Taft, at whose house in Cincinnati I had been a guest and had been privileged on several occasions to linger over his remarkable collection of pictures.

The duties of an American President are surely, of all the calls made upon representatives of nations, the most severe. Invested with greater power than

any other ruler, the magistrate of a hundred million people, mostly concerning themselves only with the politics of their particular State, often clashing with the interests of the country as a whole ; from all quarters fierce lights beating upon him incessantly, with which hardly has he become accustomed, ere comes the distractions and turmoils of another election. The Presidential term of four years would appear to be too short. Six years would give the occupant of the White House far better opportunity to do himself justice, cause less friction, and be much less costly to the country. This I have found to be the view of many thoughtful Americans.

New York puts on a fresh aspect from year to year, and always to beautify herself. What changes have come over the city since I was first there in 1885 ! Above 42nd Street there were, as I remember, nothing but private houses, all unbeautiful and known as brown stone fronts. Where now stands the imposing building of the Metropolitan Library was a great grass-covered embankment enclosing the reservoir of the city. Shops now stretch up as far as Central Park, with isolated brown stone fronts here and there, with the great steps cut away. Many of these shops or stores are palaces of white marble, such as Tiffany's the jewellers, and Sloane's carpet warehouse. The aspect of Fifth Avenue is now very imposing, though it is to be regretted that some of the buildings are much too high for the breadth of the street. The clubs, too, the Universities, the Century, and Union and others

have all helped to adorn New York. The Knickerbocker Club, which in the eighties was far down town, is now housed in a fine Georgian building well up Fifth Avenue, where it faces the Park.

I knew this club first when it was down town. Dear me, how good the cooking was in that peaceful and distinguished club-house. Incidentally I believe its hospitality once saved my life. My friend the late Mr. Whitridge put me up there, and at the time I was enjoying the delights of walking typhoid, such being the name the doctor gave my complaint. He allowed me to continue acting, but said it was imperative that I should have specially cooked food, which was not to be had at my hotel, it being on the American plan, as were all the hotels in those days, except the Brevoort House, far down town. I used to stagger round to the Knickerbocker for my breakfast and remain there the whole day till it was time to go to the theatre, and in two weeks I was myself again, thanks to the quiet and the good food.

About two-thirds up Fifth Avenue is the Catholic Cathedral of granite glistening in the clear air. How it comes to be so well proportioned and imposing a building I do not know, since it was built in the early forties, when architecture was at a very low ebb. On the left, a little further up, stands an exquisite Gothic church by the architect Cram, of Boston, who, incidentally, wrote several pamphlets defending our cause early in the Great War, as did my very dear friend the Hon. James M. Beck, and

whose book, *The Evidence in the Case*, is an unanswerable impeachment of those who brought about the awful disaster.

Hard by Cram's church are many beautiful private houses, and then, further on, at and around the entrance to the Park, are several huge hotels which it is impossible to admire. But surrounded by these terrible precipices with holes in them is the St. Gaudens General Sherman, which is not only a perfect portrait of the man, but has such freedom of line, such movement, such simplicity, and withal such dignity that it is a perfect work of art! Here is no prancing charger, but a battle-worn horse which carries Sherman, and man and beast are perfectly in harmony. The beautiful creature holding the bridle might perhaps have been dispensed with, but no, let it go, the whole thing is very splendid.

Well, the invigorating and clean air makes one press on past innumerable princely houses on a few of which, however, here and there, the architect has been persuaded to do his spottiest, urged probably by his client to give him something for his money, something to astound, and astounding they certainly are! Then one comes to the Metropolitan Museum housing an invaluable collection of pictures, tapestries, armour, and every sort of precious thing. Here you may enjoy Bastien le Page's inspired work of St. Joan of Arc in her orchard, and examples of the comparatively little known American Master, William Hunt. To the east is Park Avenue, three times as broad as Fifth, with two wide roads between which

are grass and trees. This Avenue is full of handsome buildings which have all sprung up during the last twelve years or so. Cutting Park Avenue at 42nd Street is the Grand Central terminus, with its tiers of railway platforms which are reached by gentle inclines. This is surely the most convenient terminus ever conceived, with its vast hall comfortably warmed, where you may come by innumerable seats, food, books, papers, information, telephone and telegraph offices at almost any hour of the day or night all under one vast roof. The great Temple, for it is nothing less, which is the terminus of the Pennsylvanian Railway, is so huge that the people passing to and from the trains, look, from the Upper Hall, as though they were of some diminutive race. In East Thirty-Sixth Street is an exquisite little classic building of white marble. This is the Morgan Library, and if one is fortunate enough to have a card of entry, one is received by the secretary, Miss Green, and her assistant, two charming ladies, who are familiar, and most learnedly so, with every precious volume in the place—rare first editions, gorgeous ancient bindings, manuscripts of Burns, Thackeray, Dickens, Motley, and Tennyson; tall copies of the first Shakespeare folios and Elzevirs, as it seemed to me by the dozen. All the most valuable MSS. and printed books are kept in a fireproof room, or rather huge safe, about twenty feet by fourteen. It so chanced that while I was in this room, having been taken by my friend Dr. Bosworth, the late Mr. Morgan came in. It was past six o'clock,

and he told us that he had just come from his office down town. He welcomed us most cordially and took down one or two volumes he particularly wished us to see. I noticed that he spoke with not the slightest trace of American accent. Presently we moved into the big library on the west side of the building, his particular sanctum, where he sank into a chair before the great log fire, and for the moment he was a little removed from two or three of our party, when came from him a long, heart-rending sigh, unnoticed by the others, who were talking. Said I to myself: "Here are you almost about to envy this man his possessions and power! Would you, if you could, pay the awful price for them that groan proclaims? No." It is many years since I heard that pitiful sigh, and I have never forgotten the haunting ring of it nor the lesson it conveyed.

On a third tour, still with Jerome's play, I visited amongst other towns in the middle west, St. Louis, Kansas City, Salt Lake City, and thence to Los Angelos and up the coast to San Francisco. As the great earthquake and fire had taken place about five years before, I looked to see some ruins of the awful catastrophe, but no, the streets were all rebuilt, the big hotels, the banks, and the palatial club-houses. Only on the outskirts of the city did I find one or two sites bearing traces of the fire. A marvellous recovery was San Francisco's, for it retained all its old charm, while the streets and buildings were improved. The mystery, however, had gone from China Town, though not its inhabitants. They

are still there in great numbers, but far better housed in broad streets replacing the picturesque but squalid ones of the Chinese quarter of old.

Once more did the San Franciscans shower upon me their unbounded hospitality, and to this day I get notice of the various doings, the "high jinks," etc., of the Bohemian Club, of which I am very proudly an honorary member.

Across the Bay is nobly situated the University of Berkeley, the great seat of learning on the Pacific Coast facing the Golden Horn. It boasts an open theatre of fine proportion on Greek lines, in its size and dignity, unique, I believe, in the country.

From San Francisco to Portland, Oregan, where I next played, is a far cry, but so wonderful is the scenery, with the great Mount Shasta as the leading feature of the journey, that the hours pass quickly. Seattle was our next halt, a prosperous and thriving city, for which before building, mountains of sand dunes had to be cleared away by hydraulic power and so washed down into the waters of Puget Sound.

From thence we went by steamer to Victoria, a romantic trip, and were once more under the British flag. The Victorians are very English in their ways. All road traffic keeps to the left, the only town in the whole continent which retains the English custom.

Again we took ship to make another fairy-like voyage to Vancouver. Less than five and thirty years ago the site where this important and flourishing city now stands was virgin forest! A woodcutters' camp had been burnt out and the men and their

families were in a state of destitution. Rescue came hot haste from Victoria, when it struck the Good Samaritans that the site would be admirable for a town, and the plans were forthwith started. When I was playing with Miss Mary Anderson on the Pacific Coast in 1885, Vancouver did not exist. This town, however, is ancient history compared with some I have visited in America, whose years were only ten.

From Vancouver we moved to Calgary and Edmonton, going up the Fraser River, through the Canadian Rockies, and so down into the wheat-growing plains of Alberta. The whole of this route from San Francisco to Calgary is an unending panorama of the most varied and gorgeous nature.

To give another instance of Canada's growth, Winnipeg, our next important stop, which had been less than six years before, what is known in theatrical parlance as a one-night stand, had meantime grown so rapidly that I was able to give nine performances during a week's stay.

It was at Winnipeg in the following year that I had the sad privilege of unveiling a bronze medallion placed in the Walker Theatre subscribed to by the townspeople to the memory of the gifted Laurence Irving and his wife. This had been the last theatre in which they had played prior to their taking what proved to be their voyage "from which no traveller returns." They had booked passages to sail from New York, but almost at the last moment decided to sail from Montreal, and their ship went down in

the St. Lawrence, with those devoted two clasped in each other's arms. The stage could ill-afford to lose Laurence Irving. He was fast coming to his own as a powerful character actor, and his gifts as a playwright were considerable. I recall his father reading to me one Saturday night, after he had given two performances, his son's play on Peter the Great. It was good to be able to say how much I was impressed with its originality and power. Blessed with a beautiful disposition and high ideals, Laurence Irving had won for himself not only admiration for his art, but the love and respect of all with whom he came in contact. As I loved the father so I loved the son.

From Winnipeg I returned to the States, playing at the flourishing town of Minneapolis, and from the State Minnesota journeyed gradually southward through Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and then east to play for a week in quaint New Orleans. Here in a restaurant in the French quarter you may come by cooking such as is not to be excelled anywhere. The character of this place is so French that you can easily persuade yourself that you are in some delightful old eating-house in the Quartier Latin.

Other towns in the States of Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, South and North Carolina, and Virginia followed, and a tour of twenty-seven weeks was finished at the Mannhattan Opera House, New York. We had played in sixty-six towns, and covered a distance of over thirty thousand miles. I have

set down this itinerary to give the reader an insight into the nature of an extended tour usual enough with actors on the American continent. The distances of all my theatrical tours added together come to something well over two hundred thousand miles.

When playing in Colorado Springs during this tour, I was invited by Thomas Tynan, the warden of the Colorado State Prison, to visit it with him at Cañon City, where I was witness of wonderful things. Early on a Sunday morn Mr. Tynan motored me and Mr. George Criel from Colorado Springs, through wild scenery and glorious mountain air, to one of his several "trusty camps" eight or ten miles from the prison remote in the mountains. Here we actually found criminals treated as human beings. Here was this humane Governor doing all in his power to make those in his care win back their self-respect, instead of trying to break their spirit and destroy it. There was not any guard to watch this camp of some forty criminals, not even a barbed wire fence. They were employed in making roads through the fastnesses under the guidance of a road engineer, not himself a criminal. He lived with his wife in a tent in the midst of the camp, and, as I gathered, unarmed. We reached the camp just before the midday meal, and Tynan's reception by these men was beautiful to see.

We were surrounded by those who had committed every sort of crime. The negro cook was a murderer, the man who waited on us at table most perfectly a confirmed forger. The food was simple but

excellent, and the same as the men were having in adjoining tents. We were allowed to mix freely with them, and they told us they worked on the roads eight hours a day, and the rest of the time was their own, which they employed in various useful ways. These "trusties" were men who by their good behaviour in prison had won for themselves the privilege of being in these camps in the open air the livelong day surrounded by the imposing scenery of the Colorado mountains. At our departure the men gathered round the motor-car, and with beaming faces gave us a hearty farewell.

On arriving at Cañon City we were taken over the well-ordered prison. It struck me that all the male and female warders were imbued with the Tynan spirit. The cells were well lit and in most cases decorated with photographs and other mementoes of the outer world. Many of the men were working on improvements and repairs, a new roof here, a relaying of paving at a better level there, and so on. All evidently worked with zest and interest. I saw no prison uniform, nor were the heads unreasonably close-cropped. Neatly trimmed beards and moustaches were permitted. In short, on no one was any degrading mark of the felon. I had been over Sing Sing some months before, and the painful contrast was borne in upon me.

That night we slept in the Warden's house just outside the prison gates, and on our arrival had a hearty welcome from Mrs. Tynan. Her little child's nurse was under penal servitude for having given

false evidence while trying to screen her husband from a charge of embezzlement. She tended the child through the day and returned to her cell each night. I had a long talk with her while sitting on a bench under a great tree, the babe playing at her knees. She did not go into her history, which I had from the Tynans, but we spoke of many things, and I found her a highly intelligent and cultivated woman.

In the summer of 1909 our third daughter Chloe was born.

CHAPTER XV

VALE

The Ceremony of the Acolade—One-night Towns—The Funeral Pyre of the Sphinx—Canadian Troops—Reasons for National Service—Sir Herbert Tree—Last Performances.

ON MY RETURN to England in the spring of 1912, I came to the conclusion it was time for me to take my farewell of the stage. Mr. Percy Burton, my faithful and indefatigable manager for many years, had pointed out that it would take four years for me to make my farewell in the cities of England, Scotland, Canada, and America. Staggered at the idea of so lengthened a period of farewells, I concluded it was best to start forthwith on this four more years of nomadic life, for such it had been for eighteen years, with the exception of three seasons in London. To this end my company was considerably augmented. After visiting the principal cities of England and Scotland, I made my farewell of London at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, which lasted from March 22nd to June 3rd, 1913, my repertoire consisting of *Cæsar and Cleopatra*, *Mice and Men*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *The Light that Failed*, *The Sacrament of Judas*, *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, and

Hamlet. Of the hundreds of theatres I have played in, the Old Theatre Royal is by far and away the finest from every point of view, with its dignified and well-proportioned vestibles and stairways and an auditorium perfect for sound and sight, its acres of space for scenery and painting frames ; and with all its interesting associations it would have made an Ideal National Shakespeare Theatre. There were some negotiations to this end, but the complications of tenure appeared at that time to be insurmountable.

In June 1913 the King honoured me with knighthood. When attending at Buckingham Palace I was deeply impressed with all the splendour and dignity with which that most ancient ceremony of the acolade was performed. As I do not remember to have seen any record of this ceremonial, it seems to me to be well worth while setting down.

Briefly the order of the procedure is this. Those about to be knighted are assembled, with others to receive various honours, in one of the galleries of Buckingham Palace, and after a time they are ushered into a chamber on three sides of which are men who have served their country in every clime glittering in their various uniforms.

Members of the King's Bodyguard stand motionless at the doors and in other parts of the room. In the centre of the fourth side of the room stands the human symbol of our great Empire. On each side of him are his immediate suite. Thus a square of brilliant colour lines the chamber, leaving the centre quite clear. Into this space the future knight,

after certain instructions, is launched to make the best he can of himself. Absolute silence reigns, not any sound is heard except the distant strains of the Guards' band in the quadrangle, and at intervals the voice of the Lord Chamberlain calling the name of the person to be honoured, who steps to the centre of the room, turns and faces the King, and having bowed, he then advances about six paces and kneels at the feet of his Sovereign, who takes a massive sword from an officer on his right, lifts it on high and strikes the recipient first upon the right shoulder and then upon the left. The King then gives his left hand to be kissed, the Knight rises from his knee, makes another bow and retires backward toward the end of the chamber.

My old friend and brother actor, Frank Benson, was honoured, not midst the splendour of the Court, but under circumstances even more romantic, for he knelt to his King on his actual field of battle, so to speak, in a theatre, that field where he has so long and honourably fought the good fight !

In the following autumn I returned to America with my wife. On this first farewell tour of the States, which opened with a season of three months in New York, I took the same repertoire that had served me at Drury Lane, and practically the same company, and all the scenery, dresses, and properties of the eight plays, which when on the move filled eight freight cars each forty feet long, and for the company two passenger cars. This train, I was given to understand, was the biggest ever hauled

for theatrical purposes. On my second farewell tour, my wife having to remain at home, Miss Laura Cowie was my leading lady, and admirably did she acquit herself in the four arduous parts she was allotted. On this tour I took only four plays, opening at Detroit, and we then played at Chicago for a month. Indianopolis, St. Louis, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City, and Los Angelos followed, when we went for three weeks to San Francisco.

Here I had the good news of the birth of our fourth daughter Diana.

As during the rest of the itinerary we were not to make any stops long enough to make four plays necessary, I reluctantly decided to abandon *Cæsar and Cleopatra*. The scenery and properties were very heavy, loading three cars. These would have been most costly to haul across the continent and then ship to England. To sell or give away the scenery would have been against the customs regulations, I therefore got permission from the authorities to have it burnt.

The whole of the scenery and furniture were piled on the seashore early one morning round the Sphinx (a huge construction more than fifteen feet high), and set on fire. My carpenter and his men were heart-broken, in spite of the fact that this holocaust was to save them no end of labour and trouble for the rest of the tour. They became quite eloquent on the subject of the Sphinx's last moments, how her face was lit up by the rising sun, and how she majestically dominated to the last the volumes of

smoke that circled around her, and finally how she sublimely disappeared in huge flames. She had been modelled with great skill by the sculptor Lucchese, and we had all become much attached to "That part woman, part beast."

It has to be recorded that the Sphinx mysteriously avenged herself, for the day after her cremation, Miss Cowie, whose votary she had been as Cleopatra, unfortunately broke her leg when falling on an icy pavement, and was detained in San Francisco for six weeks.

Meantime having played in Portland, Tacoma, and Seattle, we came to Victoria, where we found ourselves in the midst of war preparations. Long lines of trenches and scientifically constructed dug-outs were all along the sea-front. Rifle-ranges and camps filled with magnificent types of man in uniform everywhere. We found the same activity in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. A battalion at Calgary, having just come from a route march a little before I was due at the officers' mess, I discovered on my arrival at the parade ground, was waiting that it might be marched past me! Deeply moved at the honour shown me, I stood erect with bared head as the battalion swung past me in perfect alignment on the hard and slippery snow. It was my privilege afterwards to address the officers and men in a huge drill hall. In Winnipeg, with the aid of the local manager, we were able to give a special performance of *The Passing* to officers and men chosen from the various battalions, who

CHLOE, JEAN, DIANA, AND MAXINE.

To face p. 272.

marched to the theatre headed by a band of pipers!

From Victoria to Winnipeg, one question was put to me over and over again. It was this. Do the people in the Old Country realize what we are up against? I had to confess that the vast majority did not. No warnings year after year from General Roberts and a few other far-seeing men, and indeed from the very Junkers themselves, had had the slightest effect. This the Canadians could not understand. "Here are we," said they, "thousands upon thousands of miles away from England, but we know, and have known. This catastrophe is not a bolt from the blue for us, this drifting on the part of the Old Country for so long, what was the cause?" My answer was: "We in England are of a stiff-necked generation, nursed and trained in a fools' paradise for over a quarter of a century, as far as the question of Imperial defence goes. And then, your great distance from the Old Country would seem to have given you a proper perspective of the lessons of the past, and of the coming storm. We, on the other hand, would appear to be too near the picture to realize the impending struggle——" I found myself on common ground on the question of preparedness with those stalwart westerners from Victoria to Winnipeg, a far cry.

Here am I moved to set down my views on the grave question of National Service.

Twenty years ago was the time to introduce National Service on the lines of the Swiss Army.

That was the time to explain to the ignorant people the vital necessity of being prepared. With an army such as Switzerland's in the hands of General French, and the Navy given a free hand to prevent cotton going into Germany, we should most certainly have beaten back the Hun, fought him in his own land, and the war would have ended in their defeat in less than a year. Then we could have sat down and discussed the brotherhood of man, a League of Nations, and all the rest of it to our hearts' content.

And what is the price we have paid for listening to this precious cant about the liberty of the subject? A phrase used in the Commons by trumpery fellows when hurling foul abuse at Lord Roberts, because he dared tell the people the truth, and plead for National Service. To contemplate it is appalling. A magnificently trained army holding its own against overwhelming odds, two, four, ten to one against it, the bravest of the brave shamefully sacrificed. Then comes the noble and romantic answer of our people to Lord Kitchener's call, but too late to deliver the knock-out blow, too late to stem the ghastly sacrifice of the finest manhood of the Empire. Belgium and the richest part of France devastated, the wilful murder of innocent civilians both on land and sea. The needless destruction by the Hun of many noble monuments, which all the art of man and all the dollars of the universe can never give us back. The enemy given time to develop all the devilish contrivances of illegitimate warfare. Europe in a ferment, Russia at the mercy of cut-throats and thieves, and

the end not in sight. Our country and fair France burdened with overwhelming debts from which they will take generations to recover, and all for the lack of five hundred thousand bayonets in August 1914. We can proudly and justly boast of the valour of our sailors and soldiers, valour unequalled in the battles of all history, of the dignified calm of our people under the most appalling circumstances, but of little else. Of reasonable foresight there was none. In short, we refused to take out a fire insurance policy, so to speak, and we must ever bear in mind that we have only ourselves to blame for the disastrous consequences. Kitchener's Army took six months to train, whereas had they had as much training as our Territorials, they would have been ready for the front in less than six weeks. The great majority of our people are possessed with a childish terror of what they call militarism, not realizing that Switzerland has never in any way suffered from militarism, neither has Belgium, which was perhaps the most industrious and prosperous of all the countries. By the wildest stretch of imagination neither of these countries can be looked upon as dominated by the military, and is it to be supposed for a moment that the British character, if under National Service, would allow itself to be dragooned by the Militarist pure and simple? Here is no question of a great standing army, confined for years in gloomy barracks, but simply the compulsory extension of the Territorial system to every class. Were this achieved, then only could we boast that

we were a true democracy. If a country like little Switzerland can by the ringing of a bell have three hundred thousand soldiers mobilized in twenty-four hours or so, what should hinder us from doing the same ?

There is a certain class of person in this country so obsessed with the bugbear of militarism that he would gladly, if he could, sweep out of existence the finest movement of our times for the betterment of our race—Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts—because forsooth they consider it inculcates the military spirit ! One was given to understand that the medical authorities were aghast at the huge percentage of young men who proved quite unfit for service at the front. Here is a powerful remedy for such a state of affairs—National Service.

Our people made a great cry about compulsory training of the brain. Heaven knows what beneficial influence was not promised us forty years or so ago. It appears to have escaped us at the time that it is useless to attempt to train a brain in a feeble body. It is now imperative to explain to our people that we must have compulsory training of the body, which we can only thoroughly get by National Service. We now know that in six months a raw recruit can be turned into an efficient soldier, and at the same time get enormous benefit from discipline and so teach him to discipline himself and fit him for life's struggles. We have seen the advantages to our youth from the training for the war, and common horse-sense points out that this

six months' training should be given before, and not after, a catastrophe occurs. A League of Nations to stop fighting? By all means, but first get your policeman and then talk. Unless our people can be brought to understand the absolute necessity for National Service, that we may maintain our place in the world, and at the same time improve and develop the general health, stability, and character of our race, the next generation will suffer all the horrors we have gone through, and far worse, as sure as the sun will rise to-morrow.

Having set down my attitude toward the grave and important question of National Service, I now return to the small beer of my personal doings.

On June 2, 1915, the honorary degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon me by the University of Columbia at the hands of the Principal, Professor Murray Butler, a man of extraordinary parts, and the life and soul of that great University. As at Harvard there is a drama side under the able direction of Professor Baker, so at Columbia Professor Brander Matthews looks after the would-be student of the drama, who gets instruction in the art of the playwright. The profession of journalism too has its votaries at Columbia, and they are in the hands of the erudite Professor Talcot Williams, known amongst his friends as the walking encyclopædia.

There yet remained many towns in which I had not made my farewell, some in which I had not appeared at all. With one or two exceptions, they consisted of places where only one performance

could be given. So far, I had not had the experience of a whole tour made up of one-night stands, and was told by some that did I not indulge in a private car, I should not be able to endure the ordeal, but certainly break down. Others, on the contrary, declared that a private car would be the death of me. I decided to try one for the first three weeks, at the end of which time I came to the conclusion that if I did not abandon this luxury it would certainly prove my funeral car. I returned therefore to life in hotels, good, bad, and indifferent, many of which were good, all of them clean, and several admirable. Most of the theatres, however, as far as the dressing-rooms were concerned, were abominable, filthy, and quite insanitary.

One great difficulty was that in these small towns there was no supper to be had in the hotels after the play for love or money, and one had to seek out some modest café or "luncheon bar" where, on a revolving stool, sitting at a marble counter, one was regaled with ham and eggs and a glass of milk. By the time one reached the hotel it was after twelve o'clock, and the train call was generally half-past four, but seldom later than six. From four to five hours' sleep therefore was the rule. Often we would reach our destination only in time to go straight to the theatre. This final tour began on October 1915, when we played in one hundred and twenty-two towns in six months. At last the tour was ended, and when I reached New York my one feeling was that I wanted never again to see a railway station.

The whole company numbered forty; strangely enough not one of us was sick or sorry at any time during this arduous tour.

Some months before the end of this tour, the Dean of the Protestant Cathedral of New York had done me the honour of asking me to take part in a Shakespeare memorial service, and thus I found myself on April 23rd in the pulpit of that Gothic pile which rises majestically on the heights of Morningside addressing a huge congregation.

My friend Herbert Tree, who had been in the West, arrived in New York in time for the ceremony, in which he took part. When we met in the vestry I was concerned at his changed appearance, the more so as he complained of having been overworked, for to complain about himself was never his wont, and I felt that the old buoyant spirit was cast down. I did not see him again until we met in London a few weeks later; but my hopes that the sea voyage and the coming home had set him up were sadly dispelled. Nevertheless, his optimistic spirit had returned, and he was full of plans for further undertakings, which, alas! were never to be carried out.

Herbert Tree had the rare gift of thoroughly enjoying a story against himself. He told me once of a conversation with a gillie, who was taking him up a remote mountain-side, when he improved the occasion by enlightening him on the great educational influences of the stage, the importance of the actor's art, with his power of elevating the public

taste, etc., when the gillie said : " Well, well, it would seem that y're little better than a minister ! " Tree often bade to his table my old school-fellow, Charles Allen. On an occasion Allen allowed some claret to pass him, when Tree urged him to take some, as it was especially good. His glass was accordingly filled, and having taken a sip he set down his glass saying : " Talking of cheap clarets " !

Tree was once describing to a brother actor, Edward Sass, outside the theatre stage-door, how in his performance of the death of King John, he swept the crown from his head, and suiting the action to the word he swept off his hat, then, pointing to it lying in the gutter, and while Sass was spell-bound by this unusual proceeding on the part of a distinguished actor in the public street, remarked : " Whose hat is that ? " His retort to a cabman is well known, but it will be fresh to some readers. " Home," said Tree, jumping into a hansom with a friend. " Where's that, sir ? " Replied Tree : " Do you suppose I am going to tell you where my beautiful home is ? " A minor actor, about to leave his company, importuned him to write a letter of recommendation to some manager. A day or so later, being of a pushing disposition, he asked Tree during a busy rehearsal if he had written, upon which he said : " No, I wired ! "

On an occasion when Tree was staying with Colonel Lowther at Hurstmonceaux Castle, and while they were disporting themselves in the beautiful grounds, a party of sightseers who had come on a

wrong day to view the Castle approached, and one of them, addressing Lowther, begged permission to be allowed to see the Castle and grounds as they had come a long way expressly for that purpose. He at once said : " I am not Colonel Lowther. This gentleman," turning to Tree, " is the Colonel." The spokesman then renewed his request, with many apologies for coming on a day not set apart for the public. Tree, with great affability, welcomed them, saying they were at liberty to go over the Castle and gardens, and begged them to pick as many peaches as they liked ! Then indicating Lowther, he said : " This gentleman, you will, I am sure, be glad to know, is the celebrated actor, Sir Herbert Tree." Upon which Colonel Lowther, wishing to turn the tables, bowed, with : " At any time you would like to visit my theatre, I shall be only too pleased to give you boxes or stalls ! "

My brother Norman at one time had a picture-gallery in Bond Street, into which Tree strolled at a time when my brother was out at luncheon. His secretary was much concerned and proposed to send for my brother, when the visitor gave his name as Mr. Pierpoint Morgan. Tree said he had no time to wait and hastily departed. Now Norman was acting in Tree's theatre, and in the evening he asked him how things were going at the gallery. " Oh ! " said Norman, " I missed a great chance to-day. Pierpoint Morgan called, of all people." " Indeed, how very interesting ; what was he like ? " " Oh," said my brother, " I was unfortunately out,

but my secretary told me he was an awful-looking bounder" ! Tree used to delight in this story, as he did in the following, in which, however, to his regret, he was not concerned.

Lowther and Norman, on passing through Hyde Park one Sunday afternoon, mingled with a crowd listening to an inflammatory Socialist, and on coming to the conclusion that the speaker's sentiments were distinctly unwholesome, he and my brother conspired. At the time there was an Italian called Suchi, who had caused some sensation by fasting for, I think, forty days. Now my brother had been very hard worked, and in consequence looked somewhat pale and cadaverous. Turning to his neighbour in the crowd, Lowther whispered : " I think you will be interested to know that the gentleman on my right," indicating Norman, " is the fasting man, Signor Suchi." The man told this to another, and the news flew from mouth to mouth. Lowther, having given sufficient time for this thrilling information to saturate, offered his arm to Norman, saying, " Come, Signor," and the pair moved slowly away, the supposed Suchi with faltering steps, leaning heavily on his friend's arm. Needless to say, the orator was quickly bereft of his audience, as the whole crowd followed the couple curiously to Hyde Park Corner and watched Lowther help " Signor Suchi " into a cab with the keenest interest.

Tree's wit and humour, of which he was full to the brim, were always quaint and original. He revelled in *non sequiturs* and epigrams. His wit

was never at the cost of others, but, on the contrary, often bearing some pretty compliment indirectly. In his own quaint fashion he once paid a very graceful tribute to his brother, Max Beerbohm. We had spoken much of this gifted writer, Tree's face beaming with pleasure all the time, when suddenly he looked grave, and said : "There is only one thing I have against Max, it is borne in upon me that in after years I shall come to be remembered only as Max's brother."

In success or failure he was ever the same joyous, child-like, laughter-loving creature. The ups gave him no airs, and the downs he took with a brave philosophy. His career was a credit to himself and a great good fortune to the theatre-going public. For myself I miss the man badly, and I believe I always shall.

But to return to the Cathedral service.

After the ceremony, I hurried to catch a train to Boston. I had been invited to give three farewell performances of *Hamlet* at the University of Harvard in the Sheldon Lecture Theatre, which Professor Baker had ingeniously transformed into a veritable reproduction of the stage of the Fortune Theatre in Shakespeare's time, of which he had discovered the measurements and plan, specially for the occasion of my last appearance in the part, and on the stage. I had had the honour of being invited to play *Hamlet* at the Sheldon Theatre under the same conditions some years before, and the experiment proved most interesting.

This small stage, with its big apron extending into the midst of the audience, on which most of the action of the play had to take place, necessitated considerable rehearsing on the part of the company and property men, as all the " business," and indeed the general movements, had to be entirely changed to meet the new conditions. At the previous performances I had been much struck by the way in which the construction of an Elizabethan and Jacobean stage lent itself to the movements and the situations of the play, and how much less fatiguing it was to the actors, due to their not having to cover so much ground, as on an ordinary stage. The stairways on each side of the apron stage were very convenient for the ceremonious processions and the movements of the crowds. The gallery at the back of the stage lent itself admirably to the coming of the Ghost, making his appearance remote and vague. Continually were the lines being, so to speak, directly illustrated—" To split the ears of the groundlings," were spoken in the presence of the Harvard students seated and crouched on the rush-covered ground below Hamlet's feet. At Hamlet's questions to Polonius, " Do you see yonder cloud ? " the characters were actually gazing into a representation of sky above their heads, instead of into a modern ceiling and half-lit chandelier. So with the wonderful passage, " This excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congre-

gation of vapours." Hamlet addressed the firmament. All this, as it seemed to me, was illustrative to the audience and inspiring to the actor, and also produced a sense of intimacy between the player and his audience, hardly to be felt on the regular stage.

And this particular audience, how attentive it was! Not a movement, not a cough, the place might have been empty for all the sound there was from the crowded house, the seats of which were in tiers semicircular as in an ancient Greek theatre. The audience was composed of the professors and their friends and many students, and people from Boston. Professor Elliot was there, and the present head of the University, Professor Lowell. All the supernumeraries were played with the greatest enthusiasm by the students, who comported themselves with grace and dignity in Denmark's Court. Fine specimens of stalwart youth were chosen for soldiers, and those of them who bore me from the scene on shields did it more perfectly than ever that ceremony had been done before. At the end of the play, with all my faithful company round me, we took many calls, and then it seemed fitting that in their presence I should address a few farewell words to the distinguished audience. On advancing to do so, the whole audience rose to its feet, and remained standing till the end of my speech, which graceful tribute moved and considerably embarrassed me in my final utterances.

On leaving the stage, I was led by my brother to a large room, where I found my people assembled. They had conspired to give me a surprise. Forth-

with a beautifully phrased address, written by one of my company, Mr. J. H. Irvine, was read out to me, the flattering nature of which I may not set down here. Then was handed to me an exact little replica in bronze, ten inches high, of the chair I used in *Hamlet*. I learnt afterwards that the company could not make up their minds as to what the character of this farewell gift should be, when the question was solved by my wardrobe mistress, Mrs. Pearce, in her proposing a model of the *Hamlet* chair, which was unanimously adopted. She had been with me for nearly twenty years, and I was delighted to find she was so actively associated with the presentation. To say farewell to the audience was ordeal enough, but here was a position yet harder in having to face my people for the last time, the majority of whom had so loyally helped me for four years, and some of them for very many more. Surely no manager had ever more constant and loving adherents. I take pride in recording their names.

Richard Andean.
Allan Attwater.
Miss Cicely Barcham.
Miss Phyllis Bullen.
Percy Burton.
C. Haviland Chappell.
S. A. Cookson.
Miss Laura Cowie.
Valentine Cuthbert
Geoffrey Dunlop.
Miss Ada Ferrar.
H. Athol Forde.
Miss Marion Grey.
Miss Nannie Griffin.
Miss Augusta Haviland.
George Hayes.
Ray Henderson.
J. H. Irvine.
Mrs. Pearce.
Sam T. Pearce.
Walter Ringham.
Ian Robertson.
E. A. Ross.
Miss Mary Sumner.
C. Austin Trevor
Miss Joan Tuckett.
Miss Wheeler.

Here I cannot resist from quoting an overwhelmingly flattering telegram which reached me from Herbert Tree on the eve of this event.

"On this important night I should like you to know with what admiration and sympathy I send you my heartfelt congratulations on your great achievement and splendid termination of your dignified career. All our stage is proud of you. May you live many years in our united esteem and grateful memory of the public. God bless you, my dear Johnston.—TREE."

After saying farewell to my people, and many friends who had been in the audience, my friend Professor Baker in particular, I went down to my dressing-room to take off Hamlet's robes for the last time. I had played the part many hundreds of times pretty regularly for over nineteen years, beginning at the mature age of forty-four, and ending in my sixty-fourth year. A revival of *Hamlet* had saved my financial position on many occasions. Over and over again both in England and America, when the production of a new play had spelt failure, a revival of *Hamlet* had always set me on my feet again. Yet I stripped myself of Hamlet's garb with no sort of regret, but rather with a great sense of relief, for not only was it my last appearance in a part which had cost me a vast amount of mental and physical strain, but the last of theatrical management, the gambling nature of which had always been abhorrent to me. On looking back, it seems to me that I was far more nervous on the last per-

formance of *Hamlet* than on the first. It is said that nervousness is a necessary attribute for the actor, and that he who does not suffer from it is rarely of much account in his art. It may be so, but all I can say is that as far as I personally am concerned, it has been nought but a shackling handicap. Never at any time have I gone on the stage without longing for the moment when the curtain would come down on the last act. Rarely, very rarely have I enjoyed myself in acting. This cannot be the proper mental attitude for an actor, and I am persuaded, as I look back upon my career, that I was not temperamentally suited to my calling. For years I fought hard against this " ego," but seldom would I reach that impersonal exaltation, so to speak, which it seems to me an actor should be able to attain. At rare intervals I have come by it in great passages of the Shakespeare tragedies, and notably when playing *Hamlet* on two occasions before audiences composed of my brother and sister players in New York.

Ah ! yes, I do remember another time when I felt the exaltation of absolute enjoyment in acting, and that was when it was my privilege to play on June 25, 1918, at a benefit performance in Sir James Barrie's exquisite fantasy, *A Well-remembered Voice*. A son, killed in the war, appears to his broken father ; and closes a moving interview, in which he reproaches his father for being sad, with the simple words, "You see, if you're bright, I'll get a good mark for it." A beautiful gospel that, I like to believe.

INDEX

Abbey, Edwin, 139, 144
Adams, Henry, 137
Ainger, Canon, 204
Ainley, Henry, 236
Alexander, Sir George, 238
Anderson, Miss Mary, 129, 139, 143
Arkwright, Ferdinand, 96

Baker, Professor, 277
Bancroft, Sir Squire and Lady, 78, 92, 95, 233
Barnes, J. H., 79, 173
Barrie, Sir James, Bart., 148, 288
Bayreuth, 155
Beck, Hon. James M., 258
Beecher, Henry Ward, 204
Beerbohm, Max, 192
Beere, Mrs. Bernard, 145
Bellew, J. M., 213
Bellew, Kyrle, 213
Benson, Sir Frank, 103, 270
Berlin, 175
Bernhardt, Sarah, 233
Blind, Carl, 49
Blind, Mathilde, 49
Bonnechose, Cardinal Archbishop, 37
Bonsécours, 22
Booth, Edwin, 104, 132, 165
Bottomley, Horatio, 170
Boucicault, Miss Nina, 223
Boughton, George, 107
Bradshaw, Commander A., 101
Brewer, Rev. Dr., 45
Brookfield, Charles, 94, 214
Brown, Ford Madox, 49
Browning, Robert, 217
Buchanan, Robert, 79
Burnand, Sir Frank, 91
Burne-Jones, Sir Edward, 161
Burton, Percy, 268
Butler, Professor Murray, 277
Butler, Samuel, 53, 54, 55

Cæsar and Cleopatra, 243
Caldicott, Randolph, 137
Calgary, 272
Calvert, Charles, 67
Campbell, Lady Archibald, 100
Campbell, Mrs. Patrick, 163, 167, 173
Carr, Comyns, J., 161
Carrots, 199
Carte, D'Oyley, 89
Cecil, Arthur, 73, 214
Cellier, Alfred, 67
Charterhouse, 17
Chicago, 234
Clay, Cecil, 71
Clayton, John, 111, 165
Coghlan, Charles, 111, 166
Collins, Alfred, 135
Colorado State Prison, 265
Connaught, Duke and Duchess of, 255
Conway, Harry, 213
Cowie, Miss Laura, 271
Craig, Gordon, 67
Cram, Ralph, 258

Davidson, John, 166
Davis, Mrs. Jefferson, 133
Davis, Richard Harding, 241
Desclée, Aimée, 56, 77
Dicksee, Frank, Sir P. R. A., 57
Drew, John, 98
Duclaux, Madame, 107
Dyall, Franklyn, 173

Edward Prince of Wales, 111
Elliott, Miss Gertrude, 197, 202
Elliott, Miss Maxine, 254
Empress Eugénie, 146
Empress Frederick, 178
Esmond, H. V., 235
Evans, Admiral, 255

Farren, William, 223
Faucit, Helen, 69
Faure, Gabrielle, 182
Fletcher, Miss Constance, 223
Florence, 194
Forbes, Norman, 70, 103, 122, 281
Forbes-Robertson, Beatrice, 141
Forbes-Robertson, Ian, 141, 165, 173, 203, 227
Forbes-Robertson, John, 13, 220
For the Crown, 166
Frohman, Charles, 148, 227
Frohman, Daniel, 149

Garrick Club, 71
Garrick Theatre, 143
German Emperor, 177
Gilbert, Alfred, 57
Gilbert, W. S., 77, 90, 113
Gladstone, W. E., 153
Godfroi, Victor, 22, 27, 28, 36
Gosse, Edmund, 49
Grain, Corney, 215
Greet, Ben, 100
Grey, Lord and Lady, 255
Grieg, 173
Grossmith, George, 216

Hamlet, 42, 170, 227, 283
Hanbury, Miss Lily, 125
Hare, Sir John, 112, 143, 162
Harker, Joseph, 222
Harrison, Frederic, 164
Harrod, Mrs. Frances, 44
Harte, Bret, 77
Hay, John, 137
Henry VIII, 149
Higginson, Henry L., 138
Holl, Frank, 57
Hollingshead, John, 70, 76
Horsley, Victor, 61
Horsley, Walter, 61
Houghton, Lord (Monckton Mills), 163
Hunt, Holman, O.M., 85

Irving, Sir Henry, 70, 115, 127, 162, 165, 209, 236, 264
Irving, Laurence, 263

Jackson, Rev. Mr. and Mrs., 100
James, Henry, 246
Jerome, Jerome K., 252
Jones, Festing, 55
Jones, Henry Arthur, 144

Keene, Charles, 107
Kemble, Henry, 94, 214
Kendal, Mr. and Mrs., 76
King Arthur at Lyceum, 161
King Edward, 199
King George, 255

Landseer, Charles, 58
La Tosca, 144
Lee, the Misses, 133
Leighton, Lord, 60
Lever, Charles, 71
Lincoln, Abraham, 102
Linton, Mrs. Lyn, 206
Lockwood, Frank, 151
Lords and Commons, by Pinero, 231
Loveday, Henry, 152
Lowther, Col. Claud, 281

Macbeth, 41, 183
MacDonald, George, 19
MacDonald, Greville, 19
MacDonald, Robert, 19
Mackenzie, Sir Alexander, 203
Macquoid, Percy, 53, 57
Macready, William Charles, 69
Maddick, Dr. Distin, 235
Maeterlinck, Maurice, 182
Maggi, 191
Marshall, Captain Robert, 168
Marston, Philip Bourke, 207

Marston, Westland, 206
Martin Harvey, Sir John, 173
Martin, Homer, 118
Masson, Prof. David, 19
Masson, Sir Orme, 20
Matthews, Professor Brander, 277
Maurier, Gerald du, 78, 87
M'Carthy, Justin Huntley, 107
McCullough, John, 102
Meade, Tom, 80
Meredith, George, 73
Mice and Men, 203
Michael and His Lost Angel, 166
Miersvinski, 104
Millais, Sir John Everett, 60, 83
Millett, Frank, 140
Minto, Lord and Lady, 255
Modjeska, 56, 99, 102, 232
Moore, Sir Ralph, 159
Morgan, Pierpoint, 260
Morris, Mr. and Mrs. William, 48
Much Ado About Nothing, 115
Munn, George, 118

Neilson, Adelaide, 77, 213
Nettleship, 53
Neville, Henry, 77, 87
New York, 257
Nilsson, Christine, 55

Ober-Ammergau, 196
Othello, 219
Ouless, Walter, R.A., 56

Page, Bastien le, 259
Page, Thomas Nelson, 256
Parker, Louis N., 156, 168, 184
Parsons, Alfred, 140
Partridge, Bernard, 173
Pelleas and Melisande, 182
Pellegrini, Carlo, 215
Phelps, Samuel, 68, 70
Phillip, John, R.A., 20, 21
Pinero, Sir Arthur, 123
Pompeii, 192
Prinsep, Val, R.A., 61
Prussia, King of, 20

Quartermain, Leon, 199, 222
Queen Victoria, 146
Quincey, de, 249

Reade, Charles, 63, 205, 208
Regnault, Henri, 113
Reske, Jean and Edouard de, 104
Robertson, Tom, 205
Robins, Miss Elizabeth, 145, 231
Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. George, 107
Rome, 193
Romeo and Juliet, 165
Roosevelt, Theodore, 256
Rorke, Miss Kate, 95, 143, 235
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 46, 206
Rousby, Mrs., 62
Ryley, Mrs. M. L., 98, 204, 236

St. Gaudens, 131, 138, 234, 259
Salvini, 79, 131
Sandys, Frederick, 47
San Francisco, 261
Sargent, John, 140
Sellar, Mrs. E. M., 247
Shaw, George Bernard, 55, 124, 198, 243
Sheridan, Mrs., 159
Sherman, General, 132
Sicily, 186
Sickert, Walter, 100
Smith, Aubrey, 223
Stead, William, 141
Stirling, Mrs., 103, 124
Stokes, Adrian, 57
Sugden, Charles, 113
Sutherland, Duchess of, 235
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 43, 72

Tabor, Robert, 183
Tadema, Sir Alma and Lady, 49
Taft, Charles, 256
Taft, William, 256
Taylor, Tom, 208, 212
Tennyson, Alfred, 232
Terriss, William, 116
Terry, Edward, 117

Terry, Miss Ellen, 63, 66, 115, 151, 171, 209, 246
Terry, Miss Kate, 77
Terry, Miss Marion, 90
Thackeray, Miss Georgina, 28
The Devil's Disciple, 198
The High Bid, 246
The Light that Failed, 223
The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith, 163
The Passing of the Third Floor Back, 252
The Profligate, 143
The Sacrament of Judas, 184
The School for Scandal, 169
The Winter's Tale, 139
Thornycroft, Sir Hamo, 131
Toole, John L., 126, 242
Tree, Sir Herbert, 279, 282, 287
Tynan, Thomas, 265

Valentine, Sydney, 223
Vancouver, 262
Venice, 195
Vezin, Herman, 113, 206
Victoria, 262
Villiers, Frederick, 57

Walker, Frederick, R.A., 58
Ward, E. M., R.A., 58
Ward, Miss Genevieve, 83
Ward, Sir Leslie, 58
Warner, Charles, 79, 103
Watts, George Frederick, O.M., R.A., 20
Whistler, James McNeil, 107
Whitridge, James, 258
Wilde, Oscar, 109
Williams, Professor Talcot, 277
Wills, G. W., 62, 207
Wilson, Woodrow, 256
Wingfield, Hon. Lewis, 113
Winnipeg, 263
Wood, General Leonard, 256
Wood, Mrs. John, 73
Wortley, Archibald, 112
Wyllie, W. L., R.A., 57

Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, LONDON AND WOKING